SILENT CITIES: SENSATIONALISM AND REMOVED POPULATIONS WITHIN FOURTEENTH CENTURY WESTERN CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM TRAVEL ACCOUNTS OF BAGHDAD AND JERUSALEM

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the removal of surrounding populations within fourteenth century travel literature in the cities of Baghdad and Jerusalem. I analyze two Christian travelers, Marco Polo and John Mandeville, and one Muslim traveler, Ibn Battuta. As a basis of comparison, I discuss the twelfth century Muslim traveler, Ibn Jubayr. I specifically analyze Baghdad and Jerusalem due to the fact that they represent cities of centrality for Muslims and Christians, respectively, within medieval geographic understanding. I argue that fourteenth century travel literature presents a paradigm based in sensationalism and population removal due to their focus on entertainment and wonder, rather than education and dissemination of knowledge.

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INTRODUCTION

> Emperors and kings, dukes and marquises, counts, knights, and townsfolk, and all people who wish to know the various races of men and the peculiarities of the various regions of the world, take this book and have it read to you. ... We will set down things seen as seen, things heard as heard, so that our book may be an accurate record, free from any sort of fabrication.

Such was the way Marco Polo (d. 1324 CE) began his text, which captured the essence of the tale imparted to the European audiences and, as noted in the first line, was designed for all. It did not matter whether one listened to or read the accounts. To satisfy curiosity about the "foreign," Polo reassured his audiences that the tales told within the pages reflected a true record that spoke of the "peculiarities" of the surrounding world. Though this section of text came from Marco Polo's writing, it could easily placed at the beginning of many other surviving fourteenth century travel texts. The assertion of accuracy maintained cultural and religious fantasy. This was especially true for Europeans traveling to the East, who related their wares with Christianity. Such fourteenth century travel texts were widely known and popular among all classes, as the literary appetite for these works rose during this period.

While Muslim accounts did not begin the same way, they nevertheless established a precedent for traveling. For example, Ibn Battuta (d. 1377) opened his *Travels* establishing his motive for pilgrimage and devotion in his journey, leaving his friends and family behind. He stated, "Swayed by an overmastering impulse within me, and a long-cherished desire to visit those glorious sanctuaries, I resolved to quit all my friends and tear myself away from my home [to embark on pilgrimage]." He did not address the reader or assert that he was to recount all that he experienced, but he did provide a reason for travel – to visit "glorious sanctuaries" and go.

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[1] Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, trans. Ronald Latham (London: Penguin Books, 1958), 33.
[2] Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, trans. H.A.R. Gibb (New Delhi: Goodword Books, 1929), 43.

INTRODUCTION

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on pilgrimage.[3] However, this did not necessarily represent a fourteenth century trend seen in some of the literature. Many travelers throughout the centuries told stories in order to describe their duty to go on pilgrimage. In doing so, Muslim travelers established precedent and a need for traveling that aligned with their faith to Islam. For instance, the eleventh century traveler Nasir-i Khusraw (d. 1060 CE), recounted a dream-vision he had that awoke him from a forty-year stupor. In order to repent for his drunken ways, Khursaw embarked on a pilgrimage, and thus began his travels.[4] Ibn Jubayr (d. 1217 CE) supposedly had a similar reason for traveling after he drank wine, a forbidden drink in Islamic tradition. As such, Muslims embarking on travels threaded Islam throughout their texts, in much the same manner as Christians. Ibn Juzayy, Ibn Battuta's editor and writer, acknowledged that he did not check the accuracy of the statements Ibn Battuta orated because they had already been given the "strongest proofs."[5] Here, as in Marco Polo's work, the authors and travelers gave their readers assurances of truth and accuracy, establishing an audience for which these texts were published, and it was publication, creation, and dissemination of travel texts that grew during the fourteenth century.

Throughout the Middle Ages, Western Christians and Muslims both used pilgrimage as a reason to travel to the Middle East, though not exclusively so. Embarking on pilgrimage was encouraged in both religions but more decidedly so within the Islamic tradition as it signified one of the foundational pillars of the religion. The pilgrimage (*hajj*), one of the five pillars of Islam, represented a journey to Mecca and Medina, the holy cities of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad, wherein Islam laid its roots. Muhammad was purportedly born in Mecca, received his first message from God in Mecca, but was later removed from the city with a small following of

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Nasir-i Khursaw, *Safarnama*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston Jr. (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2001), 2.

[5] Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, 42.

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believers in the midst a larger community of polytheists. After he emigrated from Mecca, Muhammad found refuge in the city of Medina, where Islam began to gather strength and more believers. Medina also houses the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad.[6] It is worth noting this brief history in order to understand the significance of Mecca and Medina, especially considering that they are not of the three cities at the heart of this discussion of pilgrimage and city perception. Within Christian tradition, pilgrimage was not considered necessarily a "pillar," but it still held a similar significance as a symbolic journey taken to become more spiritually pure.[7] Moreover, pilgrimage for Christians involved making physical contact with saints. Thus, for both Christians and Muslims, pilgrimage offered a means to satisfy a spiritual journey.

Travel literature represented a subgenre of geography, where writers recorded their views of the geographic landscape both physically and demographically. Geographically, Jerusalem signified the center of the world for Christians, and Isfahan or Baghdad symbolized the center of the world for Muslims. Western travelers – both Christian and Muslim – who embarked on pilgrimage often traveled to these cities in the Middle East, but not all pilgrims would travel to the same locations. Prior to the fourteenth century, travel literature presented a more structured account of experiences. Ibn Jubayr represents an example of this, where his account provided dates of travel and a more complete portrait of the cities he traveled. However, this changed, and as fourteenth century travel texts came to include more of the fantastic and sensational, and omitted the populations within the cities, creating the illusion of a "silent city." Sensationalism can be defined as the purporting of unrealistic events and descriptions that were meant to entertain and inspire awe, rather than educate and disseminate knowledge. The fourteenth century authors removed the populations within the cities, creating the illusion of a "silent city"

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[6] J.C Broadhurst, "Introduction" in the *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, trans. J.C. Broadhurst (London: The Camelot Press, LTD., 1952), 16.
[7] Margaret Wade Labarge, *Medieval Travellers* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1983), 68.

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by describing architectural features and political figures at the expense of discussion of the general population of life in the cities, which formed a sense of solitude and emptiness within reports of Baghdad and Jerusalem. The omission of ethnographic information does not provide a complete picture through which these cities can be viewed by populations of the time. Popular fourteenth century travel literature was read by European audiences, conveying a sense of the "foreign" and "other." However, without ethnographic material, one could question whether a complete understanding of the East could be produced. The material and cultural environment of the West influenced the way in which authors conveyed the geographic landscape at the time. The phenomenon of sensationalism is especially visible throughout the writings of Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville (d. 1371 CE), in which the authors focused the details of their accounts on these elements that entertained rather than the truth. Marco Polo, John Mandeville, and Ibn Battuta erased the surrounding populations of their cities when discussing the architecture and physical descriptions, thus creating "silent cities."

This research argues that travel literature as a fourteenth century genre fostered sensationalism among readers in order to maintain religious myths and cultural fantasy. Through this sensationalist focus, the three authors overlooked the depiction of the citizens of cities of geographic centrality in the medieval period – Baghdad and Jerusalem. They did so in favor of focusing on architecture and tales regarding the cities' history. However, two centuries earlier, the writings of Ibn Jubayr illustrated more communal interactions in addition to these political and architectural features of the cities of his time. Ibn Battuta and Ibn Jubayr shared similar backgrounds and goals for travel, despite the two-century difference between their texts. As Muslims from the West, they, too, embarked on their *hajj* as an "other" to the East, despite their

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confessional identity.[8] However, where Ibn Jubayr related events and described the general population around him, Ibn Battuta described the architecture of the cities and political figures only. He, as with the European travelers, elided the people and populations surrounding him and chose to focus on the more sensational elements of Baghdad and Jerusalem. In analyzing the differences between these exemplars of twelfth and fourteenth century travel literature, my argument focuses on the ways in which sensationalism removed the population of cities of medieval geographic significance within Muslim and Christian travel literature.

In order to follow through with this argument, I will use four travel texts – one from the twelfth century and three from the fourteenth century – in order to view sensationalism and the removal of populations within these works. Before I begin my analysis of these sources, it is necessary to lay the groundwork of the field, specifically in understanding travel literature, geography, and city centrality. These themes comprise the foundation of this research. Although I will constantly discuss sensationalism, these themes comprise the foundation of this research and will never leave the periphery of this study. It is for this reason I have spent much time detailing the fields. Following this discussion, I will provide insight into the authors and their texts, addressing concerns and scholarly discourse. Only after this section will I begin analysis of Ibn Jubayr, Marco Polo, John Mandeville, and Ibn Battuta. These examples and research are presented as case-studies to view the shift to a fourteenth century paradigm that focused on more sensational characteristics of cities and removing the surrounding populations in order to perpetuate cultural and religious fantasy. Some may argue that because there has been little evidence to suggest a rigorous note-taking while en route, which then allowed for mistakes, exaggerations, and erasures, that this accounted for the loss of populations and sensationalism.

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[8] "Confessional identity" represents the way individuals within the medieval world identified their religion, or confession. More than a "denomination," confessional identities extended to everyday life and the way they fit within a community.

However, the rhetoric of the text suggests a purposeful removal of these features and does not account for the insertion of sensationalism. More research needs to be done to confirm the hypothesis presented by this research; however, the Christian and Muslim examples analyzed offer insights into the differences between twelfth and fourteenth century travel literature discussing the East.

Travel Literature as a Genre and Discussions of Sensationalism

Travel literature as a subgenre of geographical writing represented a body of texts that sought to provide insight into other, "foreign" regions of the world. In this particular study, we will be analyzing the role sensationalism played in the transmission of information within travel literature. The notion of sensationalism as a unit of study is seldom discussed at length in secondary research analyzing travel literature. Scholars often discusses the broad genre of travel literature under the umbrella term "medieval travel literature," and further refine their studies to the East, West, or interactions between the two.

Scholars debate about the purpose of fourteenth century travel literature, and some acknowledge an evolutionary quality to the way in which it entered society. Margaret Labarge focuses *Medieval Travellers* on the thirteenth to the mid-fifteenth century, primarily analyzing European, high-status travelers.[9] Despite the fact that her study began with the thirteenth century, she acknowledges that most of the travel writing up to the mid-fourteenth century tended to be "bald and factual, with little personal response to the new wonders they saw or the difficulties they faced."[10] For those travelers taking notes of nature, Labarge commented that legends seeped into the collective consciousness, noting that rhinoceroses could appear to be unicorns and

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[9] Labarge, *Medieval Travellers*, xii-xiv.
[10] Ibid., xiv.

barnacle geese could have come from tree growths.[11] The movement from factual to fantastic

was not completely polarized. Instead, travelers sought to make sense of their world, but equally

wrote for European popular audiences, conveying information that would sell. Considering the

fourteenth century shift, the fact that the author began with the thirteenth century rather than the

twelfth is a negligible difference. She analyzes John Mandeville and Marco Polo and recognizes

the enrapturing tales of both travelers, but provides more credit to Marco Polo for truth and

accuracy.[12]

Similar to Labarge, Donald Howard, author of *Writers and Pilgrims: Medieval*

Pilgrimage Narratives and Their Posterity, focuses on authors writing from a purely European

perspective. However, Howard specifically examines the "'literary' tendencies of the pilgrimage

narratives," and their uses in teaching and entertainment, religion and curiosity.[13] In defining

"literary," he states that while none of the pilgrim authors were poets or artists, their work

deserves the title of literature. Though more of these "literary" elements are found within the

fifteenth century, the groundwork for this emergence were already present in older works. Based

on this, "literature plays a role, though it is scarcely acknowledged, in the development of

fiction."[14] The difference of focus also led to a divergence in opinion on the initial popularity of

fourteenth century travel literature. Howard argued that the popularity of many travel guides,

especially pilgrimage texts, were limited to the region the author originated, and only a few

writings, such as those of Mandeville, gained much esteem and popularity on a wider scale.[15] In

contrast, Labarge discusses the aristocratic demand for travel texts for their sensational

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[11] Ibid., xiv-xv.
[12] Ibid., 3-4.
[13] Donald R. Howard, *Writers and Pilgrims: Medieval Pilgrimage, Narratives, and Their Posterity* (Berkley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1980), 53.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., 5-6.

narratives, in the sense that works like those of Mandeville stimulated the imagination, and the

appeal for medieval readers lay in the "more fabulous portions."[16] In the specific instances of the

pilgrims John Mandeville, Marco Polo, and, though not referenced by Labarge or Howard, Ibn

Battuta, their texts almost instantly became popular. Thus, for the purposes of this study, we

must analyze the works for not only their contexts, but also their immediate fame within a

Western social milieu that popularized travel literature.

      Considering the debate on the intended popularity of the sources, scholarship exists that

discusses the allure of the genre originating from an earlier period rather than exclusively from

the late Middle Ages. In *Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing 400-*

1600, Mary Campbell devotes an entire chapter to the "travel romance" that, contrasting

Labarge, began with the Greeks, namely Ctesias (d. fifth century BCE).[17] However, this

progression of "travel romance" literature over the centuries, she says, reflected in the

"documentary accounts of such later rediscoveries of the East as Marco Polo…."[18] While this

claim may hold some truth to it, Campbell fails to define what she means by "documentary

account" and the depth to which these romances influenced the writing. Additionally, the author

characterizes the imagery of Marco Polo as hardier than those of previous sources because of his

concrete and accurate descriptors that were not completely hidden behind misnomers. It is she

who cites an example from Marco Polo's text where he mistakenly called a rhinoceros a unicorn,

yet the animal's identity can be deciphered through his comparisons to real and known species.[19]

However, Campbell also admits the tradition of fantasy and romances of the East that were

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[16] Labarge, *Medieval Travellers*, 5.

[17] Mary B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing 400-1600* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 48-49.

[18] Ibid., 49.

[19] Ibid., 49.

written as Polo grew and began his own travels.[20] She argues that though there are romantic elements to his writings, Polo represented an author who brought more reality to his accounts than previous travelers.[21] Campbell's reliance on Marco Polo as a more credible source than that of Mandeville or other European travel writers insinuates a sudden shift in the fourteenth century paradigm for travel writing; however, the explanation perhaps lies in Polo's occupation as a merchant.[22] While occupation may have influenced the writings of Marco Polo, modern scholars have acknowledged the demand for sensational literature, which may have equally influenced the writings of Polo. Campbell discusses the evolution of travel literature and the popularity of the genre; however, the romance and sensationalism she discusses as characteristic of medieval travel literature does not acknowledge some travelers. She does not provide insight into Ibn Jubayr who, as an Andalusian traveler, was European, geographically speaking, and represents one who does not write with elements of sensationalism that she suggests are present throughout the genre.[23] The fantastic component associated with travel literature sensationalism translated into beings that, in a descriptive manner, further divided Europe and the Middle East as authors described the "foreign."

Discussions of travelers to the Middle East in the late Middle Ages often brings perceptions and interpretations of the accounts of monsters and fantastic beings. Texts such as *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* and *Wonders of the East*, an eleventh century travel narrative by an unknown author, certainly provide sensational accounts of supposed monsters. Courtney Barajas asserts in her essay, "Reframing the Monstrous: Visions of Desire and a Unified Christendom in the Anglo-Saxon *Wonders of the East*," that the European public who read the

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[20] Ibid., 87.
[21] Ibid., 88-90.
[22] Ibid., 93.
[23] Andalucia refers to a territory in Spain.

texts did not take the account at face value, but rather the "monsters" represented intentional

symbols that revealed a desire for a "symbiotic relationship with the East based on emotional,

linguistic, and sexual exchange."[24] Much of the fantasy used by the Europeans stemmed from the

Greeks. Equally within Islamic tradition, the 'Abbāsid translation movement saw the importation

of Greek texts that more widely influenced the writings of Arabic scholars and travelers, and

Greek monsters and explanations of the strange and unknown entered into the awareness of

Muslim travelers.[25] Travis Zadeh suggests that the explanation for such creatures influenced

"salvation history," and the monstrous designs of creatures were attributed to God's

unexplainable creations.[26] Though both authors focus on the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the

same fantastic themes run throughout medieval travel literature. In discussions of thirteenth and

fourteenth century travel literature, Christine Chism discusses wonder tales (*'aja'ib*) in Ibn

Battuta's and Ibn Juzayy's texts.[27] However, where Chism denotes *'aja'ib* as recreating "the world

as an unfolding course of events," Zadeh states that *'aja'ib* manifested through a confusion that

arose from a lack of knowledge about the cause of a given phenomenon.[28] Monsters and fantasy

do not necessarily reflect sensationalism that we see in later literature; however, these

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[24] Courtney Catherine Barajas, "Reframing the Monstrous: Visions of Desire and a Unified Christendom in the Anglo-Saxon *Wonders of the East*" in *East Meets West in Medieval and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 246.

[25] For further reading on the translation movement and its impact, see Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbasid Society (2-4th/8th-10th centuries)* (New York: Routledge, 1998), Hayrettin Yücesoy, "Translation as a Self-Consciousness: Ancient Sciences, Antediluvian Wisdom, and the 'Abbasid Translation Movement," *Journal of World History* 20/4 (2009), 523-557., George Saliba, *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), and Shane Borrowman, "The Islamization of Rhetoric: Ibn Rushd and the Reintroduction of Aristotle into Medieval Europe," *Rhetoric Review* 27, 4 (2008), 341-360.

[26] Travis Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers across Medieval Islam: Geography, Translation, and the 'Abbāsid Empire* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 4.

[27] Christine Chism, "Memory, Wonder, and Desire in the Travels of Ibn Jubayr and Ibn Battuta" in *Remembering the Crusades: Myth, Image, and Identity*, eds. Nicholas Paul and Suzanne Yeager, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 32.

[28] Chism, "Memory, Wonder, and Desire," 32, and Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers*, 3.

mechanisms illustrate the same exaggerations made to both make sense of their world and provide a fascinating tale.

Modern scholarship, as seen above, divided travel literature by Western travelers or Eastern travelers, Christian or Muslim, and their interactions and observations, maintaining a discourse of "otherness." Campbell's text is representative of these divisions. Her monograph contains two large sections titled, respectively, "The East" and "The West." These parts are not representative of the West and East as defined by the three continental regions of Africa, Europe, and Asia, but rather, the cardinal directions on either side of Europe.[29] Though she discusses European travelers at a broad level, her scholarship only focuses on Christian travelers for the time period in which I am studying. Campbell compares and contrasts the Greek traditions with those writings of later Christian travelers; however, her study is primarily rooted in Christian traditions.[30] Throughout her chapters, she discusses the "other" in context of exploration, but nevertheless, the dichotomy exists within scholarship. However, these trends are seen within other scholarship much more explicitly. Within *Journeys to the Other Shore: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge*, Roxanne Euben argues that through travel literature, "a sense of home and other is produced and transformed through shifting sets of nested polarities."[31] Travel literature cannot exist without a "foreign" component that creates an experience that signifies "us and them." The reason for this reliance stems from the essence of travel literature that involves travelling to a place away from "home." As Euben explores, the representation of "home" shapes the way in which travelers view lands, and she uses the example

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[29] Campbell uses the "West" in her text to discuss the Americas and the Atlantic world, not as a definer of Europe, as is often the case in scholarship regarding medieval travel literature. She does this primarily due to the chronological scope of her text, which extends to 1600.

[30] Ibid., 5.

[31] Roxanne L. Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 18.

of Islam to illustrate the changing political and social environments that may affect the perceptions of other parts of the world, even if those sections remain in the Islamic world.[32] Thus, the "other" formulates a part of scholarship as well as the writings of the time, and must be considered even within the context of a single religion in addition to the differences between regions and confessional identities.

In exploring the genre of travel literature, scholars have focused on two primary areas: the way in which individuals received travel literature, and the dichotomies presented within them. Though the topics seem fairly simplistic, the underlying roots begin to stretch into subtopics and categories such as sensationalism, authorship, and the evolution of the genre. Travel literature as a subgenre of geography revealed topographical features, a fact corroborated by all scholars listed above; however, as analyzed in the works of Labarge, Howard, and Campbell, within the European travel narrative, reality could be skewed for the author's audience. The notion of sensationalism represents the focus of this thesis and one that we will be further exploring within the genre of travel literature considering the analysis provided by scholars within the field.

Geography: Origins, Theory, and Arab Thought

Medieval geography can be divided into several subgenres that have been influenced by various cultures. Specifically, within the writings from Arabic tradition, Greeks, Iranians, and Indians contributed to the establishment of a geographic understanding. Scholars have largely agreed on the impact of Greek writings over the development of scientific, or physical geography. Physical geography meticulously and logically outlined the world based on

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[32] Ibid.

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mathematical precision, rather than details provided in sensational narratives.[33] Claudius

Ptolemy's *Geographia* (150 CE) warned against traveler's tales due to their inaccuracies in

observations (1.4.1).[34] Geography in Arabic thought was explained as a "survey of the world"

(*qaṭ' al-arḍ*), which did not necessarily imply a scientific understanding.[35] Instead, this "survey

of the world" produced several subgenres of geography, which included physical geography.

Bernard Lewis asserts that the subgenre of geography depended on the geographer. He

specifically cites one of the earliest known Muslim geographer, Ibn Khurradādhbih, who, as an

official in the postal service, wrote to inform his field during the ninth century.[36] Professional

geographers and those describing the world through their writings, such as travelers, influenced

the creation of these subgenres. Within the scholarship surrounding the formulation of Arab

geographic thought, multiple theories underlined their understanding of medieval geography and

the surrounding world.

Medieval Islamic scholars hypothesized about the geography and configuration of the

world through various theories such as circular, climatic, scriptural, spatiality of difference, and

concept of place. These theories can be seen in the genre of geography and within its subgenres,

namely travel (*riḥla*) and praise-of-place (*faḍā'il*) writing.[37] Writers of both forms of literature

described the world around them, providing topographical details that allowed perceptions of

[33] See El-Sayed El-Bushra, "Perspectives on the Contribution of Arabs and Muslims to Geography," *GeoJournal* 26, 2 (1992), 157-166; George H.T. Kimble, *Geography in the Middle Ages* (New York: Russel & Russell, 1938); and Akhatar Husain Siddiqi, "Muslim Geographic Thought and the Influence of Greek Philosophy," *GeoJournal* 37, 1 (1995), 9-15.

[34] Ptolemy, *Geographia*, trans. Louis Francis , accessed June 9, 2017, http://www.reshistoriaeantiqua.co.uk/Ptolemy%20B.html.

[35] W.P. Heinrichs, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Djughrāfiyā."

[36] Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1982), 138.

[37] For further reading on *faḍā'il* writing, see: Samer Akkach, "Religious Mapping and the Spatiality of Difference," *Thresholds* 25 (2002), 68-75., Zayde Antrim, *Routes and Realms: The Power of Place in the Early Islamic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), Arezou Azad, "The 'Faḍā'il-i Balkh' and Its Place in Islamic Historiography," *Iran* 50 (2012), 79-102., and Nancy Khalek, "Iconic Texts: Damascus in the Medieval Imagination," in *Damascus after the Muslim Conquest: Text and Image in Early Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

various places to take shape. Ralph Brauer examines the relationships and boundaries of medieval Muslim geography through the analysis of both scholars and "observers that are not 'scholar-geographers.'"[38] In his analysis of maps, he noted that while cartographers distinguished provinces and borders by rectangular shapes, their actual size and definitive spatial relationship with one another was not present.[39] The uncertainty and vague political boundaries perhaps supported the formation of two important theories in Arabic geographic thought: climatic (*iqlīm*) and circular (*kishwar*).

Both *kishwar* and *iqlīm* based their tradition in the conception of seven different climes. Ptolemy originally presented the idea of climes within his works, which Arabic geographers later adopted.[40] Zadeh discusses the significance of both theories throughout his text, *Mapping Frontiers across Medieval Islam: Geography, Translation, and the 'Abbāsid Empire*. Though both are zonal, *kishwar* was based on circular zones arbitrarily made in order to divide kingdoms, cultures, and separate identities.[41] Building upon this, Zayde Antrim states that this model, originating from the Persians, was used in later geographic writing to separate the world, though not defined circularly.[42] Similarly, *iqlīm* was based on the same principle of separation.

J.T. Olsson devotes his entire article to the understanding of the climatic model and the nuanced disagreements within the writings of medieval Muslim scholars of the time which illustrated complexities of climes.[43] Arabs based the climatic model on longitudinal zones that

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[38] Ralph W. Brauer, "Boundaries and Frontiers in Medieval Muslim Geography," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 85, 6 (1995), 1.

[39] Ibid., 5.

[40] Zayde Antrim, "Connectivity and Creativity: Representations of Baghdad's Centrality, 3rd/9th to the 5th/11th Centuries," In the *Islamic Civilization*, ed. İsmail Safa Üstün, 55-74 (Istanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi, İlâhiyat Fakültesi, İslâm Tarihi ve Sanatları Bölümü & İslâm Konferansı Teşkilatı, İslâm Tarih, Sanat ve Kültür Araştırma Merkezi (IRCICA), 2011), 57; and J.T. Olsson, "The World in Arab Eyes: A Reassessment of Climes in Medieval Islamic Scholarship," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 77, 3 (2014), 488-489.

[41] Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers*, 85.

[42] Antrim, "Connectivity and Creativity," 57.

[43] Olsson, "The World in Arab Eyes," 487.

not only indicated climate, but also physiological and psychological features of the inhabitants –

a way of defining and characterizing the "other." The fourth clime represented the most

temperate and balanced of the zones, where fitness both physically and mentally could be found

within its people.[44] Some of the disagreement between medieval geographers stemmed from the

placement of the fourth clime. It not only represented the most temperate, but also signified the

center of their world. Some medieval scholars placed the city of the caliph, Baghdad, as the

center; however, others chose the Persian city, Isfahan, depending primarily on time period or

the ruling regime.[45] By doing so, Baghdad moved into the third clime, which was, according to

the climatic theory, slightly worse.[46] However, Lewis argues that historical writing on the West

rarely referenced *iqlīms*, and they held no place in the "corporate self-awareness of Muslim

peoples."[47] Whether these theories occupied a space within Arab consciousness does not

diminish the relevance of the theories in geographic discourse.

Each theory, while seemingly removed from discussions of Western travelers, illustrates

the establishment of geographic notions of identity from an Eastern context. Moreover, the

understanding of medieval geographic thought from both a Western and Eastern tradition allows

for a more rounded image of how geography influenced identities and perceptions throughout the

Middle Ages. To those in the Middle East, these travelers were strangers and "others."

Inhabitants of the cities in the East based their impressions and notions of the travelers on the

way they understood the world and their place within it.

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[44] Ibid., 489.
[45] Later Islamic *sultans*, the *de facto* leaders of portions of the Islamic world despite recognizing an 'Abbasid figurehead based in Baghdad, chose to move their seat of power to the Persian city. See Jurgen Paul, "The Histories of Isfahan: Mafarruki's Kitab maḥāsin Iṣfahān," *Iranian Studies* 33, 1, 2 (2000), 177-232.
[46] Ibid., 494.
[47] Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, 60.

City Centrality: Baghdad and Jerusalem

Baghdad and Jerusalem represented the center of the Muslim and Christian worlds, respectively. It is worth noting the differences in the centrality of these cities. Jerusalem marked a religious city important to Christian tradition and became a holy site associated with pilgrimage. Baghdad, also referred to as the City of Peace (*madīnat al-salām*), operated as the seat of the caliph, the ruler of the Islamic world. In Islamic tradition, Mecca and Medina represented the holy cities; however, they never served as the center of the world in Muslim thought. Ibn Jubayr, Ibn Battuta, Polo, and Mandeville each traveled to Baghdad and Jerusalem; however, the Christians emphasized the centrality of Jerusalem more than the Muslims with Baghdad. Modern scholarship has nonetheless discussed the roles of the cities as centers for Christians and Muslims.

Central cities served as points connecting the Islamic and Christian worlds in order to unify otherwise fractured localities. Antrim discusses the ways in which defining a city as the center of the world promoted connectivity between communities (*umma*) within the Islamic world, past and present. She argues that the connection "was useful and compelling in legitimizing creativity and authority in the Islamic world more broadly."[48] Religion and city centrality were inseparable. Though Antrim discusses centrality from an Islamic perspective, we are able to also get a sense of Jerusalem's centrality in Christian thought. Iain Higgins analyzes Jerusalem's geographic centrality in the context of medieval travel texts and presents an argument based on *The Book of John Mandeville*. He asserts that *The Book of John Mandeville* illustrates a unique case where the social, political, and religious environment of the time contributed to a work that more firmly stressed the centrality of Jerusalem in a theological and

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[48] Antrim, "Connectivity and Creativity," 56-57.

literal way than other medieval travel texts of the same time.[49] Moreover, Jerusalem was connected to Jesus, a divine figure in Christianity, and thus further perpetuated the relationship between city and religion. In Islam, too, Jerusalem held significance as a site of pilgrimage. According to the Qur'an, The Prophet Muhammad made his night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, where he ascended into heaven.[50] Though Baghdad was established following Muhammad's death, the city itself connected with Islam. Antrim, in *Routes and Realms: The Power of Place in the Early Islamic World*, discusses the etymology over Baghdad's name, which was imbued with religious controversy, translating to "gift of the idol."[51] The name caused some controversy among Muslims, and some made an effort to "Islamize" the name to *Madīnat al-Salām*, which translated to "The City of Peace."[52] Even through the naming of a city, religion was taken into account. Michael Cooperson acknowledges a correlation between the seat of the caliph and world centrality. However, Baghdad's height remained linked with the 'Abbāsid Caliphate, and slowly lost its prestige over time. Nevertheless, Baghdad and Jerusalem still held prominence associated with Christian and Islamic traditions, which were evidenced in medieval traveler's accounts.

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[49] Iain Macleod Higgins, "Defining Earth's Center in a Medieval 'Multi-Text:' Jerusalem in *The Book of John Mandeville*" in *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages* eds. Sylvia Tomasch and Sealy Gilles (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 31.

[50] Abdallah El-Khatib, "Jerusalem in the Qur'an," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 28/1 (2001), 26.

[51] Antrim, *Routes and Realms*, 35.

[52] Ibid., 35.

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THE AUTHORS AND THEIR TEXTS

Ibn Jubayr: The *Hajj* and His Legacy

Abu al-Husayn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Jubayr, born in 1145 CE, embarked on a pilgrimage (*hajj*) to the holy city of Mecca from Spain, his country of birth, on February 3, 1183 CE.[53] His companion, Abu Ja'far Ahmad ibn Hassan, was a physician of Grenada. While in Spain, Ibn Jubayr drank wine, a forbidden drink, under the instruction of a prince of Spain. He was filled with such remorse that he saw little other recourse than to go on *hajj* to recompense for his sin.[54] With his companion, Ibn Jubayr embarked eastward to what is often considered the central lands of the Middle East, the location of the historically and religiously significant cities of Mecca, Medina, Damascus, Baghdad, and Jerusalem. However, Ibn Jubayr never directly addressed his reasons for travel, and later seventeenth century authors wrote about his experience drinking wine, suggesting that as the reason for his departure.[55] The account of their journeys, unlike the other travelers covered within this research, discussed a day-by-day recollection of events. This allowed for a succinct and more fluid state of thoughts and perceptions of Jerusalem and Baghdad rather than the polished products that were more characteristic of Ibn Battuta, John Mandeville, and Marco Polo.

As Ibn Jubayr traveled, he recorded his thoughts and perceptions of cities and their inhabitants and, in the process, revealed his biases and subjective opinions as he progressed to Mecca and Medina. Ibn Jubayr visited the cities in question while completing the *hajj*, and he

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[53] Broadhurst, "Introduction," 15.

[54] Ibid., 15.

[55] Ian Richard Netton, "Basic Structures and Signs of Alienation in the 'Riḥla' of Ibn Jubayr," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 22/1 (1991), 22.

discussed religion throughout his travel account (*riḥla*). He critiqued the ways of other Muslims he encountered.

Indeed, Ibn Jubayr's *Travels* established a legacy that many scholars would argue served as a model for future travelers to the Middle East. Ian Netton argues that Ibn Jubayr presented a prototype on which later pilgrims based their *riḥla*.[56] This was not a conscious decision on the part of Ibn Jubayr, but merely an unforeseen consequence of the time and the popularity of the work. Netton contends that Ibn Battuta, the other Muslim traveler discussed within this study, modeled his own work off Ibn Jubayr's *Travels*. In order to make his argument, Netton divides the prototypical criteria into three sections: 1) The precise usage of the Islamic calendar; 2) the "sense of place" that characterizes the narrative; 3) the focus on the *hajj*.[57] Throughout his analysis, he focuses on these elements in order to illustrate the structure of Ibn Jubayr's work that is later mirrored in Ibn Battuta's. Of these points, the notion of "sense of place" provides a link to geographic orientation, where we might be able to see a connection to his thoughts on the centrality of cities. Netton characterizes a "sense of place," as an overt awareness of direction and orientation within a larger world that is not lost in the fantastic.[58] He suggests that Ibn Battuta's text contained the same awareness, but Ibn Jubayr wrote less of the sensational and showed a greater "sense of place."[59] However, Netton states that within both Ibn Jubayr's and Ibn Battuta's texts, one can observe a respect for place over people, and secondarily to this, a respect for certain individuals within a larger community, such as religious leaders (*imams*) and *hadith* scholars.[60] Despite the correlation between Ibn Jubayr's and Ibn Battuta's works, Netton limits

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[56] Ibid., 21.
[57] Ibid., 23.
[58] Ibid., 28.
[59] Ibid., 26.
[60] Ibid., 28.

the control of his study through a structural and not contextual approach to the understanding of *riḥla* literature.

In contrast, Christine Chism characterizes the work of Ibn Jubayr and Ibn Battuta as two separate types of literary genre: chronicle and wonder tales (*'aja'ib*).[61] The sensationalist characteristics that this research offers as the difference between these texts within the same subgenre of *riḥla* are viewed as a part of the *'aja'ib* tradition.[62] The definitions of these literary genres are not absolute and mutually exclusive. Rather, Chism acknowledges the inherent sense of wonder naturally occurring in both accounts. In the case of Ibn Jubayr in particular, the notion of "otherness" as communicated through wonder can be seen throughout his writing. As Chism states, "the narrators are continually placed in uncanny positions, improvising and obliterating boundaries between self and other, friend and stranger, Muslim and Christian."[63] These dichotomies existed throughout any travel literature where the destination lay outside of familiar territory. However, these concepts represent an awareness of place that Netton contends is necessary to comprise a *riḥla*. However, both scholars, despite the debate on legacy, agree that the Ibn Jubayr presents a chronicle, recounting his journeys. Where scholars debate authorship with the other travelers discussed in this research, such discussions do not occur with Ibn Jubayr due to the meticulous and dated nature of his *Travels* and the provisions of individualism characteristic of firsthand accounts.

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[61] Chism describes these terms as separate genre; however, I consider them characteristics. Chronography as a genre reflects a very different body of literature than what Chism describes. Though Ibn Jubayr does indeed use a more precise dating system than is characteristic of chronography, we find that *'aja'ib* characteristics are found within this genre as well. Chase Robinson defines chronography as either "annalistic history, in which narrative is organized by lemmas (headings) ordered according to Hijra years, and caliphal history, in which it is organized by the reigns of successive caliphs." Though one may argue that Ibn Jubayr's work represented an annalistic history, its format does not align with that of a traditional annalistic history, such as Khalifa b. Khayyat's *History* or al-Tabari's *History*, the latter of which spanned forty volumes. Therefore, Ibn Jubayr's text is first and foremost a *Riḥla*, a subgenre of geography with characteristics of chronography and *'aja'ib*. Chase Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), 75.

[62] Chism, "Memory, Wonder, and Desire in the Travels of Ibn Jubayr and Ibn Battuta," 32.

[63] Ibid.

I will not be delving into the structural similarities between Ibn Jubayr and Ibn Battuta that Netton covers, but will discuss the overall comparative contextual understandings of the perceptions of Baghdad and Jerusalem and the Muslims. Through Netton's work, we are able to see that there are strong links between both works. It is imperative that we continue to keep these connections and the fourteenth century awareness for the earlier work of Ibn Jubayr. Chism's work, on the other hand, will be relied on throughout this study. Though her primary focus centers on the memory of the crusades, she discusses the way in which his literature conveys a memory of the time period. Memory and experience are intricately linked with travel literature as they comprise the fabric of the work itself. Ibn Jubayr, whether or not his work was influential to later travelers, represented a chronicle that recounted regular observations of cities and people in the Middle East.

Marco Polo: Authorship, Truth, and Travels

Until the travels of Ibn Battuta later in the fourteenth century, Marco Polo traveled more extensively than any predecessor from 1271 CE to 1292 CE.[64] He traveled throughout Eurasia during the late thirteenth century and recounted his journey following his return to Venice in the early years of the fourteenth century. As merchants, the Polo family traveled often, and Marco Polo's primary reason for exploration was to seek opportunity for profit. He ventured to the Far East in Japan and China, met with Mongol royalty, and depicted scenes of fascination to the European reader. Marco Polo did not travel in isolation, but rather, with members of his family, namely his uncle, Maffeo, and father, Niccolò. Together, the three Polos departed Venice, Italy, returning twenty years later wearing Mongol-style clothing packed with jewels and stories of the

[64] Ronald Latham, "Introduction" in *The Travels of Marco Polo* (London: Penguin Books, 1958), 1.

fantastic. After the men returned, Marco Polo met Rustichello of Pisa, a romance writer of some affiliation, who assisted in the creation of his *Travels*.[65]

Scholars have debated Marco Polo's role in producing his *Travels*. Peter Jackson analyzes Polo from the very roots of his travel and begins by questioning the text's authorship. The first manuscript discovered was an Old French heavily influenced by Italian. However, one hundred and twenty manuscripts survive with varying accounts and in other languages such as Latin. The inconsistency with details suggests, as Jackson states, that Polo had multiple co-authors.[66] The presence of multiple versions and accounts signified that Polo dictated the material as opposed to writing it himself. The co-authors may have taken authorial liberties with the language, and though truth may be somewhere embedded in the account, we must take into account these questions.[67] Jackson, in his discussion of authorship and manuscripts, illuminates that the most detailed version was MS Z, but many details overlapped with the lost MS R that Ramusio based his fifteenth century printed edition.[68] He states that earlier versions of the *Travels* stemmed from Marco Polo's oral histories.[69] The discourse surrounding authorship cannot be analyzed without acknowledgement that individuals continually produced versions of Marco Polo's travels based on various manuscripts. Mary Campbell asserts that, principally, there is only one "original," which is MS F, co-authored by Rustichello. She specifically states, "What information the original manuscripts contained was frequently distorted and altered by translators and editors whose scant knowledge of the East did not equip them for their task."[70] Nevertheless, other

[65] Ronald Latham, "Introduction," 12-17.

[66] Peter Jackson, "Marco Polo and His 'Travels,'" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 61/1 (1998), 84

[67] The most well known and earliest known manuscript, titled "F," published in 1300, represents the version that this research will be drawing upon through translation.

[68] Jackson, "Marco Polo and His 'Travels,'" 84. MS F came from Paris MS fr. 1116, known as F.

[69] Jackson, "Marco Polo and His 'Travels," 84-85.

[70] Campbell, *The Witness in the Other World*, 96.

versions do exist and, as Jackson relates, it seems likely that Marco Polo did not write his *Travels* himself.[71]

Considering these questions, scholars discuss whether Marco Polo traveled at all, or at least to all of the destinations recounted throughout his travels. Frances Wood argues that he never went to China, basing her evidence on the absence of a Chinese record of his arrival or presence and the lack of many details, such as the Great Wall of China, in Polo's work.[72] Considering this question of probability of travel, it is worth noting the reasons why he would travel. Wood spends a chapter discussing this; however, it ultimately results from occupation. The entire medieval world was not isolationist and networks that existed for centuries operated during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Europeans sought Chinese silk and other luxurious and exotic goods. Trade networks sustained a steady flow of travelers exchanging goods and culture.[73] However, despite the necessity of trade, the account was not a comprehensive itinerary, and Wood cites late eighteenth century scholars who tried, but failed, to do so. She concludes that his works may have heavily relied on Persian and Arabic sources available at the time describing their travels to China without having gone himself. In much the same way that Ibn Battuta followed the model presented by Ibn Jubayr, Marco Polo utilized the information presented by Arab and Persian merchants.[74] Nevertheless, his *Travels* captured the attention of Europeans. Wood's conclusions, she admits in the introduction, were not conventional, as many scholars believed that China represented one of his definitive stops. Jackson, from a different perspective, provides evidence from those Venetian individuals who interacted with Polo following his return. However, this research is not concerned with whether or not these travelers

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71 Jackson, "Marco Polo and His 'Travels,'" 85.
72 Frances Wood, *Did Marco Polo Go to China?* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 96.
73 Ibid., 11.
74 Ibid., 146-147.

arrived at their destination. Instead, their travels describe these locations with a knowledge and

presumption of the journey – the focus of this research.

Marco Polo's *Travels* describe the cities and wonders that he saw while traveling through

the East, and scholars suggest that it is through the description of the fantastic that we find the

purpose of his text. Scholars acknowledge Polo's role as a merchant; however, Jackson states that

while Polo may describe product prices, various goods, and trade markets, the text is not

representative of a merchant's handbook.[75] Campbell states that Polo means not to provide a

narrative, but rather assert his knowledge on his readers.[76] Similar to Campbell, Wood argues

that the lack of an itinerary buttresses the purpose of a description of the world, following

characteristics more prone to geography than a travel narrative.[77] Scholars converge when

classifying Polo's text as a description rather than a narrative; however, instead of concrete

geographic details, he provides his readers with a concrete landscape in order to project his

imaginative encounters.

Marco Polo's experiences and adventures came under the watchful eye of critics and

scholars alike where the authorship, truth, and purpose of his text begged questions of the

authenticity of his *Travels*. There are few facts that can most certainly be discerned: 1) Marco

Polo did not write his *Travels* and it fell under the jurisdiction of many authors over the centuries

to write about what he saw; 2) Scholars question the extent Polo traveled since many details from

significant places have been omitted from the tale; 3) Polo, despite his role as a merchant,

provided more details into the fantastic than reality. On this final point, I will continue to expand

and analyze, focusing specifically on the ways in which Polo's *Travels* ignored the individuals

surrounding him on his journeys, especially within the populated cities of Jerusalem and

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[75] Jackson, "Marco Polo and His 'Travels,'" 87.

[76] Campbell, *The Witness in the Other World*, 97.

[77] Wood, *Did Marco Polo Go to China?,* 29.

Baghdad. This research strives to analyze the sensationalist qualities of the text, rather than proof of actual travels. I am not as concerned with the identity of the author as with the text and the ways it removed the individual in order to push a more sensationalized narrative.

Sir John Mandeville: Fact or Fiction?

John Mandeville was almost certainly fictitious. The Mandeville-character identified himself as an English knight who embarked on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and travel throughout the East from 1322 CE to 1356 CE.[78] Scholars widely agree that Mandeville was a pseudonym. However, the fabricated Mandeville was not recognized as such within his own time, and explorers, such as Christopher Columbus and Walter Raleigh, and European readers believed in the author and his narrative.[79] The Mandeville-character wrote a book of *Travels*, which began circulating in Europe between 1356 CE and 1366 CE, and claimed to recount travel the Middle East to East Asia, much in the same fashion as Marco Polo.[80] However, scholars, too, agree that Mandeville never traveled to such places, and the details recounted in his text represent a composite from other travel narratives.[81] Instead, in discussing Mandeville's *Travels*, scholars have focused on themes of centrality, "otherness," and textual popularity.

More than any fourteenth century travel writer this research analyzes, Mandeville focuses on the centrality of Jerusalem. Iain Higgins analyzes Jerusalem's geographic centrality in the context of *The Travels of John Mandeville*. He asserts that Mandeville's *Travels* illustrates a unique case where the social, political, and religious environment of the time contributed to a

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[78] C.W.R.D. Moseley, "Introduction," in *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* (London: Penguin Books, 1983), 1.

[79] Howard, *Writers and Pilgrims*, 54.

[80] Moseley, "Introduction," 9.

[81] See Donald R. Howard, *Writers and Pilgrims: Medieval Pilgrimage, Narratives, and Their Posterity* (Berkley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1980), Mary B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing 400-1600* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), and Iain Macleod Higgins, *Writing East: The 'Travels' of Sir John Mandeville* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

work that more firmly stressed the centrality of Jerusalem in a theological and literal way than other medieval travel texts of the fourteenth century.[82] Geography played a significant role in the formulation of the East in the minds of Europeans. Travel literature represented a subgenre of geography because of the ways in which travelers provided details of their surroundings. In this sense, Mandeville's declaration of Jerusalem's centrality was not foreign nor completely unexpected in a text such as his. However, as Higgins relates, Mandeville focused on the concept of centrality more than his counterparts of the time. Karma Lochrie analyzes the way in which centrality played a role in creating a utopia within Mandeville's text. She states that "Jerusalem is centered and zonally configured," illustrating "a utopian geography that complements the narrative enterprise of provincializing Europe and Western Christianity."[83] Lochrie characterizes the provincial Europe as culturally emphasizing Christianity, and in doing so, Mandeville's text reflects this effort considering the theological focus throughout the narrative.[84] In relation to my research, Mandeville's emphasis on utopia and the "provincializing" of Europe does not reflect the central focus, but rather the ways in which Mandeville further amplified a religious precedent for all of Europe in his concentration on the theological. In this light, Mandeville's centrality of Jerusalem signifies an aspect of geography that imbues religiosity within his narrative in order to assert the city's divine positioning. Despite Jerusalem's Eastern residence, Western Europe, the area generally characterized as Christendom, operated around this culturally Eastern center within Mandeville's *Travels*.

In the geographic model presented in Mandeville's *Travels*, the East in theory, represented both "familiar" and "foreign;" however, this duality extended to Jerusalem alone, not

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[82] Higgins, "Defining Earth's Center in a Medieval 'Multi-Text,'" 31.

[83] Karma Lochrie, "Provincializing Medieval Europe: Mandeville's Cosmopolitan Utopia," *PMLA*, 124, 2 (2009), 593.

[84] Ibid., 594.

the rest of the East, where we see "otherness" exampled in his writing. Sebastian Sobecki analyzes the ways in which Mandeville depicts an image of the "other" and the portrayal of "transgression." He defines "transgression" as "crossing the limit between that which is known or familiar to us."[85] What Mandeville considered the Holy Land lay at the cusp of the transgression due to the grey area exemplified by Christian and Muslim lands. It is through these religious divisions that Mandeville bases his text. In characterizing the "other," Mandeville continuously uses religion to discuss race and place; however, his tolerance of other cultures spread throughout his *Travels*.[86] Equally, this tolerance did not come from experience of Muslims from the East, despite the fact that Muslims lived in Western Europe. Mandeville never traveled to these places as he, as a figure, did not exist; therefore, expressions of tolerance or otherwise come from perhaps a more "chivalrous" position, transmitting information as a kind and valued Christian. In doing so, he wrote for popularity and for an European audience, not from experience and true evaluation of "otherness."

Mandeville's text, like other fourteenth century travel narratives, spread throughout Europe in popularity. The geographic information as well as the literary flare describing the East gave readers an insight into a world that, for most, was foreign. C.W.R.D. Moseley relates the early career of the *Travels*; it was placed in an anthology, entitled *Livre de Merveille* (1403 CE), along with Marco Polo's text.[87] Moseley asserts that the placement in the anthology gave Mandeville's *Travels* a new authority.[88] The use of a group of sources in what has been characterized as an atlas illustrates the usage of the *Travels* for geographic information. Mandeville's *Travels*, unlike Polo's, helped with the creation of maps and travelers used them to

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[85] Sebastian Sobecki, "Mandeville's Thought of the Limit: The Discourse of Similarity and Difference in the 'Travels of Sir John Mandeville,'" *The Review of English Studies* 53, 211 (2002), 329-330.
[86] Ibid., 338-339.
[87] Moseley, "Introduction," 30.
[88] Ibid., 31.

corroborate a mental image with which they understood the world. Moreover, the use of travel literature demonstrated its use and significance in the travels of others. Mandeville's *Travels*, though questionable in the eyes of modern scholars, was incredibly important in discourse of the time, which testified to its popularity.

The writer of *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, though fictional as a character, compiled observations and testimonies from other sources into a single travel narrative popularized throughout Europe. The narrative guided travelers and assisted in the organization of maps, especially in the portrayal of the "other." Mandeville, like Ibn Jubayr, focused on religion throughout his work, especially in his discussions of Jerusalem's centrality. Despite the "tolerance" practiced in his writings, Mandeville never traveled to the Middle East or to China, exploring the world as a Christian on pilgrimage. Instead, we are left with a fictional character, widely popular text, and sensationalism. Though these three classifications, we are able to more fully understand Mandeville, and the analysis put forth by this research focuses on the ways in which sensationalism within his narrative removed the individual the character purported to have seen.

Ibn Battuta: The Infamous Traveler

A native of Tangier in Morocco, located in Northwest Africa, Ibn Battuta left a significant impression on history through his extensive travels and his thorough descriptions of North Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. He departed his homeland in 1325 CE to travel other parts of the Islamic lands that H.A.R. Gibb characterizes as "relatively stable and unusually favorable for travel."[89] Ibn Battuta's roles, in addition to traveler, included fugitive and unwelcome adventurer. Holding his religion close, Ibn Battuta traveled from city to city, town to town invoking the help of fellow Muslims. However, his presence in various locations was not

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[89] H.A.R. Gibb, "Introduction" in *The Travels of Ibn Battuta* (New Dehli: Goodword Books, 1929), 17.

always welcomed, which testified to his predicaments throughout his travels. Upon his return home, Ibn Battuta dictated his travels to the writer Ibn Juzayy, composing the *Travels of Ibn Battuta*. Scholarly discourse about Ibn Battuta focuses on the text, the problematic nature with some details provided, and the career of the *Travels*.

During the fourteenth century, travel literature became popularized, as we have seen with the works of other travelers, where audiences expected distant lands to be filled with the fantastic and wonder.[90] Ibn Jubayr followed the paradigm characteristic of fourteenth century travelers. The title of his work suggested a sort of preeminence to this discussion of the sensationalist themes. L.P. Harvey discusses the title of the completed manuscript, which H.A.R Gibb translated to *For the curious, a rare work concerning wondrous things in great cities, and marvels encountered on journeys*.[91] Considering this translation, one could argue that indeed his work was not rare as a travel account, since this period flourished with many tales. Instead, the length and breadth covered within his text suggested a rarity not seen by travelers of any period. Stretching into modernity, Ibn Battuta has widely been called the most extensive Muslim traveler of the pre-modern period. However, scholars have asserted that Ibn Battuta, unlike his Christian contemporaries, praised people over place, similar to that of Ibn Jubayr. Gibb states that Ibn Battuta's interest in places fell subordinate to his fascination with people.[92] Similarly, Netton described Ibn Battuta's work as following the same "sense of place," or an awareness of the world and their place within it geographically, as Ibn Jubayr. Though travelers were aware of their positioning, Netton asserts that Ibn Battuta, too, does not focus as heavily on place as he does people.[93] Though both scholars emphasize Ibn Battuta's focus on people rather than places,

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[90] L.P. Harvey, *Ibn Battuta* (New York: I.B. Tauris and Oxford University Press India, 2007), 4.
[91] Gibb, "Introduction," 5.
[92] Ibid., 12.
[93] Netton, "Basic Structures and Signs of Alienation in the 'Riḥla' of Ibn Jubayr," 28

this research argues the reverse, specifically in the examples of Baghdad and Jerusalem. Where Ibn Battuta stressed the architectural wonder, Ibn Jubayr reflected on the people and scholars with whom he saw and interacted.

Scholars equally discuss Ibn Battuta's purpose for traveling. He embarks on a *hajj*, but where we were never explicitly told in Ibn Jubayr's work his reason for his *hajj*, Ibn Battuta's reflected a "primary and explicit wanderlust."[94] In this light, though there were similarities between Ibn Battuta's and Ibn Jubayr's work, the precedent on which the two works were based represented a divergence, and an area in which the fourteenth century traveler paradigm captured those differences between the two Muslim travelers. Chism follows this interpretation in her study as she states Ibn Battuta's work reflects characteristics of *'aja'ib* literature, rather than a chronicle.[95] However, this is not to say that Ibn Jubayr completely ignored wonder. Travelers embarking to the Middle East from their Western domains signified a journey into the "foreign," and with this came an inherent need to account what, for the travelers, they had never seen before. Thus, despite the *'aja'ib* quality to which Ibn Battuta's *Travels* were written, wonder is present throughout all travel texts; however, his work specifically fell within the fourteenth century paradigm where sensationalism dominated accounts.

In discussions of Ibn Battuta's credibility, scholars analyze both the author and his *Travels*, and soon, it becomes not a question of whether he lived or traveled, but the extent to which he did so and the originality of the text. Harvey offers commentary on discussions of the usage of Ibn Battuta's name in Egypt, where it meant "extraordinary feats of travel."[96] He states that this development as a coining of his name represents a way to celebrate Ibn Battuta. His reputation preceded him, and he was especially known for the knitting together of accounts of

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[94] Ibid., 29.
[95] Chism, "Memory, Wonder, and Desire in the Travels of Ibn Jubayr and Ibn Battuta," 32.
[96] Harvey, *Ibn Battuta*, 8-9.

places and people, that, in isolation, would be ordinary.[97] In assembling a portrait of Ibn Battuta

as a traveler and orator, scholars have struggled to do so, since – as with Marco Polo – little is

known about him. In verifying his existence, Ross Dunn states that the Moroccan appeared in

three minor Muslim records of the time.[98] Gibb constructs a brief narrative, but readily admits

that the information is limited, and most of what scholars gather on Ibn Battuta stems from his

Travels.[99] Dunn finally characterizes as a traveler of four principle groups: a pilgrim; believer of

Sufism, or "mystical Islam;" scholar; and member of the elite.[100] His identity as a Western

Muslim traveler who authored his *Travels* signifies the primary means by which this research

characterizes Ibn Battuta, but it is nevertheless worth noting the difficulty with tracing his own

history outside of his *Travels*.

Nevertheless, some scholars question the credibility of the source because of its

borrowings from other travelers. Amikam Elad discusses the originality of Ibn Battuta's chapter

on his visits to Palestine, and he claims that large sections of his account are copied from the

earlier travel account of Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-'Abdarī.[101] He begins his discussion of

credibility in the way most scholars do when engaging with the questionable qualities of Ibn

Battuta's *Travels*: dating. Unlike Ibn Jubayr, Ibn Battuta does not follow a rigid dating system,

and instead, dates appear almost arbitrarily added to the narrative.[102] However, equally, Chism

uses the non-rigid dating as a way to emphasize the departure from chronology to *'aja'ib*.[103]

Dating does not discount the narrative; however, haphazard dating creates room for skepticism,

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[97] Ibid., 10.

[98] Ross E. Dunn, *Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the Fourteenth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2012), 26.

[99] Gibb, "Introduction," 2.

[100] Dunn, *Adventured of Ibn Battuta*, 30.

[101] Amikam Elad, "The Description of the Travels of Ibn Battuta in Palestine: Is It Original?" *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2 (1987), 256.

[102] Ibid., 257.

[103] Chism, "Memory, Wonder, and Desire in the Travels of Ibn Jubayr and Ibn Battuta," 31.

and because of this, scholars such as Elad suggest that his work was not completely original. Harvey states that large sections of Ibn Battuta's work were "openly" taken from Ibn Jubayr's *Travels*.[104] Many travel accounts throughout the centuries contributed to a larger discourse of the geography of the world, and as we saw with Mandeville's text, borrowing earlier accounts to craft another work occurred and represented an aspect to the accumulation of knowledge of the time. Though Ibn Battuta used sections of other traveler's works, the integrity of the text as a whole was not compromised for this research due to the fact that Ibn Battuta, despite the incorporation of material from earlier travelers, utilized sensationalism and aligned with the fourteenth century travel writing paradigm.

Ibn Battuta, one of the most famous travelers of the pre-modern world, dictated his experiences in the East to Ibn Juzayy following his return to Morocco for publication. His *Travels* offered detailed information that scholars argue puts emphasis on people over place; however, in the instances of Baghdad and Jerusalem, this research argues against this perception to suggest that he, as with other fourteenth century travel writers, removed the individual in favor of the sensational. Ibn Battuta's *Travels* presented a detailed account of the East, and though scholars have debated some aspects of the source, the tales of the East contributed to a wider understanding of pre-modern geography and travelers' perceptions of the world.

Ibn Jubayr, Marco Polo, John Mandeville, and Ibn Battuta represent the four travelers on which I am basing and supporting my argument for a fourteenth century paradigm. Their backgrounds and modern scholarship on their travels allows for the understanding that these travelers have been scrutinized by a larger community. In viewing the erasure of populations and sensationalism in fourteenth century travel literature, I analyze each traveler and their discussions of Baghdad and Jerusalem.

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[104] Harvey, *Ibn Battuta*, 7-8.

2

THE TRAVELS OF IBN JUBAYR

A Populated, Yet Fractured Islamic World: Ibn Jubayr in the City of Peace

The Islamic world cannot be thought of as a monolithic entity. The overreaching title of "Islamic world" creates a false image of a unified and cohesive group where people and politics from each corner of the sphere were the same. The picture of one entity, one view, and one collective memory greatly oversimplifies and misrepresents the complexities of Islam as a religion. However, when one takes a longer look, what may have looked like an intricate, geometric design now appears to be fractured, separating the so-called "world" into individual denominations and regional distinctions. Suddenly, the "Islamic world" is more akin to "Islamic spheres." This is how we must view the discussion of Islam and the Muslims who live within these regions. Muslim travelers from the West – Ibn Jubayr and Ibn Battuta in the instance of this research – were strangers to the East. Their customs and culture reflected a different "sphere" of Islam. The western portions of the "Islamic world" sat on the periphery in relation to the seat of the religion in Baghdad, and as a result of their distance, despite a shared confessional identity, the Western Islamic travelers to the East were considered "others," and it is in this light that we must view them.

Twelfth century traveler Ibn Jubayr offered descriptions of Muslims from the Middle East, demonstrating the social and cultural disconnect within the "Islamic world." The pilgrim from Spain held respect for the hallowed locations, but not all people, illustrating the splintering within the "Islamic world" through his writing. By doing so, he subsequently populated the cities through his descriptions; his cities were not "silent." His experiences in Baghdad, also referred to as the City of Peace, exemplified a respect for the city, its history, and its *hadith* scholars and

religious leaders (*imams*). However, he viewed the behavior and conduct of the general

population to be sinful, and his words mirrored the polemical texts seen in earlier periods in

Islamic history through his use of the Qur'an to support his positions on the wayward practices of

the city's inhabitants. Ibn Jubayr described vanity and materialism as specific examples of the

incredulous behavior of the inhabitants of Baghdad:

> As to its people, you scarce can find among them any who do not affect humility, but who yet are
> vain and proud. Strangers they despise, and they show scorn and disdain to their inferiors, while
> the stories and news of other men they belittle. Each conceives, in belief and through, that the
> whole world is but trivial in comparison with his land, and over the face of the world they find no
> noble place of living save their own. It is as if they are persuaded that God has no lands or people
> save theirs. They trail their skirts trippingly and with insolence, turning not, in deference to God,
> from that of which He disapproves, deeming that the highest glory consists in trailing one's
> mantle, and knowing not that the garment, in accordance with tradition, shall go to the flames.
> Their business they contract with 'borrowed' gold, but none among them 'give any loan to God'
> [i.e: give alms] [Qur'an II, 245].[105]

Ibn Jubayr's words indicated a backwards nature to the general population of Baghdad of which

he did not approve. Specifically, he recounted the ways in which he perceived himself through

their eyes – as an inferior. We can see this within his explanation of the scorn he received as a

stranger upon his arrival in Baghdad. Baghdad as previously discussed represented the center of

the world for many Muslims; however, Ibn Jubayr presented no admission to its centrality and

only began with an admission of the city's greatness upon his arrival. Ibn Jubayr's self-

identification as a stranger provided further testimony to his isolation from the "center of Islam"

and the broken world in which he lived.

Ibn Jubayr criticized the materialism he saw within the city, which provided insight into

not only his perceptions of the people, but also the culture of Baghdad. Specifically, he stated

that the peoples' skirts trailed behind them "with insolence," distracting from the goodness

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[105] Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, trans. J.C. Broadhurst (London: The Camelot Press, LTD., 1952), 226-227. Broadhurst has made a typo here. The Qua'ranic verse is 245, not 246.

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provided by God.[106] To support his position, he used the example of alms giving (*zakat*), one of the pillars of Islam, to assert that the population borrowed gold to pay God, but that they did not pay with their hearts, which were clouded with materialism. *Zakat* represented metaphor to assert the backwards and misguided ways of the Baghdadis. However, in doing so, his critique offered insight into the dress and behaviorisms of the people, despite his derogatory commentary. Ibn Jubayr spoke of the materialism of the people and the frivolity of the clothing that distracted from devotion to God, yet the people were ignorant of their own ways. He said in commentary of the clothing, "…and knowing not that the garment, in accordance with tradition, shall go to the flames."[107] Once again, his commentary on the garment (*al-izār*) provided details needed to paint a portrait of the individual within Baghdad. Though he did not provide a nuanced description into the *izār*, Ibn Jubayr relayed enough information and commentary on his perceptions of citizens' dress to illustrate the differences and fractures within the "Islamic world." Moreover, in the relation of culture and criticism, Ibn Jubayr populated Baghdad in a way not done by later travelers, which demonstrated the differences between the two periods.

It is worth noting that the fractures that comprised the "Islamic World" may have contributed to this negative perception of Baghdad's inhabitants. Throughout the text, an indication of comparison to Andalusian Muslim behaviors was not present, which could be attributed to the intended audience. After his return home, the later publication of the text was intended for fellow Muslim of Andalusia, and thus, Ibn Jubayr did not need a comparison. Furthermore, the way in which Ibn Jubayr discussed the inhabitants of Baghdad applied to the concept of foreign realities that could be incorporated back into a community of Andalusian Muslims and pilgrims that illustrated a distinction and implied self-superiority. Ibn Jubayr cited

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[106] Ibid., 226.
[107] Ibid.

the second Sura and two hundred forty-fifth verse in order to highlight, with scripture, the selfish and demeaning ways of the citizens, as qualified by the first few sentences of the passage that discussed the behaviorisms of the people. His attacks on inappropriate dress built up to this argument on misguided principles in their dutiful alms giving. However, within the literature one can witness a recognition of a general populace, however unfaithful he may have portrayed them.

Ibn Jubayr did not portray the citizens in sensationalized ways that suggested a fascination with the general public. Instead, and dissimilar to later travel writers, he cited the Qur'an to illustrate their wayward behaviors. One may argue that the general sense of fascination with place and attention to people represented sensationalism in and of itself. However, as seen with later writers, sensational characteristics within accounts largely ignored the average citizen in favor for the more iconic and known aspects to the cities of Jerusalem and Baghdad – they removed the individual in their lack of ethnographic discussion. Moreover, the elements to which he directed the reader's attention, such as the clothing and *zakat*, represented an evaluation of one aspect of daily life rather than a praise or falsification of events. The critique and behaviorism can be attributed to the regional differences within different Islamic communities.

Despite the fact that Ibn Jubayr placed a distinct emphasis on the wayward beliefs and behaviors of the people of Baghdad, he qualified his statements by presenting a group of more distinguished people within the city that were more worthy of his praise – the *hadith* scholars, jurists, keepers of Islamic law, and *imams*, which were grouped together under the term "*faqih.*"[108] While in Baghdad, Ibn Jubayr attended a number of lectures by *imams* that he regarded with high esteem. Each day, he attended the lectures, and wrote of their patience and devotion. However, it is worth noting that within his account of the lectures that the praise did not equate to sensationalism. Instead, we can view this sway as a bias towards scholars and

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[108] Ibid., 228.

religious leaders, since he was a scholar himself. He recounted the lectures that he attended by

recognized scholars of Baghdad, stating:

> [Radi al-Din al-Qazwini] ascended the pulpit and the readers who were on chairs in front of him
> began to recite. They filled with one with yearning and longing with pleasing voices and sad and
> moving melodies. The imam then delivered a quiet and grave discourse that dealt with the various
> branches of learning, including a commentary on the Book of Great and Glorious God [the
> Qur'an] and an exposition of the traditions of His Apostle [Muhammad] – may God bless and
> preserve him – with an explanation of their meaning. Like a shower of rain, questions were
> sprinkled upon him from all sides, and these he did not fall short to answer, and was prompt to do
> so, delaying not. A number of notes were passed to him, and gathering them together in his hand,
> he began to answer each one, throwing away each not as he dealt with it, until he had come to the
> end. When evening fell, he descended and the assembly dispersed. His disquisition was learned
> and homiletic, grave, quiet, and persuasive, revealing God's blessing and his calmness of soul;
> and the souls of the humble did not grudge the flowing of tears, especially at the end of the
> convocation when his exhortations dissolved them in contrition and weeping, and caused the
> repentant to rush into his arms.[109]

This excerpt was taken from Ibn Jubayr's recollection of the first theological lecture he attended

during Baghdad. Instantly, we can identify his changed tenor as he utilized language such as

"yearning," "pleasing," "moving," and "shower of rain" to describe the lecture.[110] He did not

criticize the speaker, but instead looked upon him with reverence and awe. His speech indicated

wonder and admiration that displayed not only a bias, but a rose-tinted view of the speaker. Al-

Qazwini acted as a religious scholar of Baghdad, and his position, similar to that of Ibn Jubayr's,

deemed him worthy of respect. His deference to God especially aligned with the way Ibn Jubayr

viewed Islam and the behaviors of fellow Muslims.

 The awe-inspired tone of Ibn Jubayr as he listened to the lecture reflected characteristics

of wonder tales (*'aja'ib*), which occurred as a result of both the content and the "foreignness" of

it. Ibn Jubayr admitted a difference between the East and the West in specific reference to the

lectures he attended while in Baghdad. He stated, "we went to other preachers in Baghdad and

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[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.

we marvelled at their excellence in comparison with the speakers we knew in the west."[111] The wonder that he expressed in discussion of the lecturers he saw while in Baghdad, all of which he lionized as patient and moving, reflected a sensationalized narrative. The *imams* were patient as they answered fully each questioned asked of them, showed perpetual deference to God, and yet, maintained a rigidity and serious tone as he discussed various aspects of Islam and the *hadith*. These individuals represented the models of faith by which to follow, and Ibn Jubayr's language reflected this preference and respect for these figures. Their inherent perfection as recounted by Ibn Jubayr seemed to attest to this notion. In consideration of the differences he saw as compared with the West, his awe occurred because of it was "foreign" and revenant to his own travels as he built his faith and understanding of Islam, not in order to further substantiate cultural fantasy. Moreover, even as he provided discussion of the *faqihs*, he continuously provided insight into the individuals present at the lectures and their interaction with the lecturer.

Although Ibn Jubayr spent much time on the *imams* and people of Baghdad, he did describe the architectural feats of Baghdad. He opened his section on the "City of Peace" stating, "Baghdad is an ancient city, and although it has never ceased to be the capital of the 'Abbasid Caliphate and the pivot of the Qurayshite, Hashimite Imams' claims, most of its traces have gone, leaving only a famous name."[112] As discussed previously, Baghdad remained the seat of the Caliphate and the center of the world to many Muslims who considered the geographic centrality of the city. But it was a city long on the decline, with a "caliph" who held little more than a title that was contest by many sects of Muslims. Ibn Jubayr respected the city for its tradition, both for its history in the development of Islam and the tangible architectural remnants of the city. He focused this illustration of the city in a separate section following the details of

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[111] Ibid., 233. The "West" referred to here was the western Islamic world.
[112] Ibid., 226.

the lectures he attended. In his description of the city, Ibn Jubayr continued to incorporate figures he revered, such as the tombs of certain *imams*. Moreover, he also mentioned more of the political figures and the elites that he encountered in his detailed portrayal of the city.

As he described Baghdad, Ibn Jubayr first characterized the eastern and western sides of the city divided by the Tigris River. He described the western side of Baghdad as "wholly overcome by ruin."[113] The western section was the older part of the city, inhabited first and divided into various quarters, where each part represented a "town," as characterized by Ibn Jubayr.[114] Each quarter offered a different spectacle, and it was in descriptions of the western side of Baghdad where Ibn Jubayr talked about the tombs of famous *imams*. For example, he related the following description of four different tombs:

> To the east of the town, on an eminence outside it, is a large quarter beside the quarter of al-Rusafah, where, on the bank, was the famous Bab al-Taq [Gate of the Arch]. In this quarter is a shrine, superbly built, with a white dome rising into the air, containing the tomb of the imam Abu Hanifah – may God hold him in His favour, by which name the quarter is known. Near this quarter is the tomb of the imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal – may God hold him in His favor – and also in this part is the tomb of Abu Bakr al-Shibli – may God's mercy rest upon his soul – and that of al-Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallj. In Baghdad many are the tombs of pious men – may God hold them all in His favour.[115]

While Ibn Jubayr discussed the architecture to a small degree, he primarily focused on relating the positioning of tombs of *imams*. This perhaps revealed more about his bias towards *faqihs*; however, I might argue that he provided coverage of many aspects of Baghdad, including the caliph's palace and the markets. These additions followed the descriptions of the tombs of the *imams*. To Ibn Jubayr, these locations within the city represented places he found interesting, which henceforth personalized his tale, not attempting to accommodate a larger audience back

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113 Ibid., 234.

114 Ibid. Baghdad contained sections based on class and societal standing. The closer one moved to the center, and to the caliph, the higher one was within society. The quarters of the city were not always accessible to all, which helped affirm their likeness to towns.

115 Ibid., 235-236. Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Abu Hanifa are two of the most important legal scholars in all of Islamic history, and founders of 2 of the 4 most prominent schools of Islamic law that survive through to the present day.

home. Moreover, as a pilgrim, the tombs of religious leaders and legal scholars represented places of interest since the tombs emulated a religiosity that Ibn Jubayr sought to follow. Subsequently, he discussed the grandeur of the Caliph's palace and the Caliph himself, whom he reports as having seen twice. Rather than describing the palace itself, he instead detailed the physical characteristics of the Caliph, al-Mustadi' (r. 1170-1180 CE).

Through Ibn Jubayr's description of the Caliph, one may argue that he sensationalized the Muslim ruler; however, to view the Deputy of the Messenger of God on Earth, what title of "caliph" meant,[116] signified an awe that did not necessarily distort the reality. On his journeys, he saw the Caliph twice, both times on his belvedere. The first time Ibn Jubayr saw the Caliph, the ruler made his way from this point of observation to the boats along the river. Upon describing the movement, he detailed his appearance. He described the handsome figure of the Caliph, his beard, his clothing which was embroidered with gold, and his overall expression. Despite the emphasis on wealth and materials as Ibn Jubayr described the Caliph, his tone held no disdain, only reverence and awe. Specifically, he related,

> [al-Mustadi'] is a youth in years, with a fair beard that is short but full, is of handsome shape and good to look on, of fair skin, medium stature, and comely aspect. He is about five and twenty years of age. He wore white dress like a qaba' [a full-sleeved gown], embroidered with gold, and on his head was a gilded cap for (royal) clothes, such as that of the marten or even bettered.[117]

In this light, his earlier criticisms of the materialistic nature of the people came to reflect a lack of religiosity that he viewed as disgraceful. However, these connections did not exist with the Deputy of God's Messenger, and the gold in his clothing, the furs around his cap, and the Turkish dress did not interfere with his piety in Ibn Jubayr's mind. His position pre-ordained his status as a faithful Muslim, and Ibn Jubayr offered no critique. Instead, he qualified his fawning

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[116] The title of "caliph" (*khalīfa*, "deputy" or "successor" in Arabic) was an abbreviation of a larger title that was a shortened form of "deputy of God" or "deputy of God's Messenger" (*khalīfa rasūl Allāh*). On the origins and changing meaning of the term in the early Islamic period, see Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[117] Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 237.

descriptions with the following metaphor, "The sun cannot be hidden even if veiled."[118] This was both in reference to the Caliph's Turkish dress used as a disguise and the view Ibn Jubayr had of the Caliph. Seeing the Caliph twice while traveling represented an opportunity in which the Andalusian Muslim would revel, since he was such an important and renowned figure within the "Islamic world" and beyond. His descriptions of the magnificence of the Caliph attested to the figure, not necessarily an attempt at distorting the truth for a sensationalized narrative – the Caliph moved from belvedere to boat and gazed upon the land, otherwise mundane activities.

Ibn Jubayr concluded discussions of the western section of Baghdad and moved to describe the eastern side. He opened with discussion of the "magnificent markets" found there.[119] He did not linger on them, and provided more of a sweeping overlay of the markets, the mosques, and the baths, but did not the people therein. Though he provided a visualization of the layout of the city of Baghdad, he spent little-to-no time describing their histories, as other travel loges of the time did, such as al-Harawī's (d. 1215 CE) *A Lonely Wayfarer's Guide to Pilgrimage*.[120] His descriptions of the city's physical features followed his discussion of the people within the city, and the lectures he attended.

Despite the time he spent describing the architecture and layout of Baghdad, Ibn Jubayr focused the majority of his writings discussing people over place, and thus did not write of "silent cities." This emphasis indicated an acknowledgement of the individual, and he did so through the discussion of *imams*, common people, and the caliph. This survey offered a well-rounded view of Baghdad's population with criticism and awe based on his own perceptions. In

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[118] Ibid., 237.
[119] Ibid.
[120] 'Alī ibn Abī Bakr al-Harawī, *A Lonely Wayfarers Guide to Pilgrimage*, trans. by Josef W. Meri (Princeton, NJ: The Darwin Press, INC., 2004). This text provided a comprehensive survey of major holy sites of interest to Muslims, Jews, and Christians. The text is organized by headers of the site and a brief description of its significance.

this light, Ibn Jubayr's narrative reflected an attempt at genuine recapitulation of his experiences and personal thoughts of the people he encountered. As a pilgrim and pious man, he evaluated individuals along the same scale, which helped to explain his reverence for the *imams* and the caliph and his disdain for the general populace. Baghdad of the twelfth century could not equate to the City of Peace at the height of the 'Abbāsid dynasty; however, he revered the city. His final sentiments of the city were best reflected in his following words, "To be short, the state of this city is greater than can be described. But ah what is she to what she was! To-day we may apply to her the saying of the lover: '*You are not you, and the houses are not those I knew.*'"[121] Baghdad, as Ibn Jubayr described, held an ancient and precedential awe and greatness; however, this understanding and respect did not equate to an attempt at sensationalizing the city for another audience or body. Instead, the account of Baghdad Ibn Jubayr provided represented an experiential and authentic record of his travels throughout the city and perceptions of the individuals inhabiting it.

A City in Passing: Ibn Jubayr in Jerusalem

Ibn Jubayr's discussions of Jerusalem represented a very small and disjointed section of his entire *Travels*. Unlike the Baghdad section, only six pages within the text that pertained to Jerusalem. After Ibn Jubayr mentioned Jerusalem for the first time, he stated, "May God restore it to the Muslims."[122] The clause indicated Christians ruled over the city. Throughout the Middle Ages, the Crusades waged between the Christians and the Muslims represented a constant struggle for control of the city. His descriptions of the city were selective. He briefly mentioned the splendor of the Dome of the Rock, and compared other mosques of different cities to those in Jerusalem. However, even in recounting these architectural feats, he did so briefly and in the

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121 Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 239.
122 Ibid., 100.

context of another city. He talked of the "Lead Dome" located in Damascus, and in doing so,

talked of its magnificence, but it was not so magnificent as the Dome of the Rock. Despite the

significance of the Dome of the Rock in Islamic tradition, his commentary on it was seemingly

limited. He stated:

> Men say that on the face of the world there is no more wonderful structure to look upon; none loftier or more marvellously built, than this dome, save what is reported of the Dome (of the Rock) in Jerusalem, which is said to be higher in the skies than this.[123]

The language of the piece suggested that he never went to Jerusalem, and this may have

stemmed from the religious conflicts of the time in the city. If, especially, the city was Christian

controlled, Ibn Jubayr may have expressed a wariness for entering, but this did not stop him from

visiting other Christian cities, such as Sicily. Chism states that within the Christian controlled

territories, Ibn Jubayr conveys a "vulnerability," but this reservation to enter the Christian

regions was fear of seduction by Christians and their "good management."[124]

However, it is worth noting that though he did not go to Jerusalem formally, or it was not

reported as such within his travels, he did take care to notice the individuals, even if for only a

brief and specific purpose. Ibn Jubayr only briefly discussed populations of Jerusalem, but in

doing so, he did populate the world around him in his writings. As he departed the city of Tyre,

he boarded a ship and sat separately from Christians. Here, he talked of pilgrims. In discussing

pilgrims to Jerusalem, he states, "some Christians called 'bighriyin' [from the Italian *pellegrini* =

pilgrims] came aboard. They had been on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and were too numerous to

could, but were more than two thousand."[125] Though the number of pilgrims may reflect a more

sensationalized tale, pilgrimage to Jerusalem was common, and travelers sought the sights to be

seen within the walls. Instead of focusing on what he gleaned about Jerusalem from what he

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[123] Ibid., 308.

[124] Chism, "Memory, Wonder, and Desire in the Travels of Ibn Jubayr and Ibn Battuta," 36.

[125] Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 325.

stated, the traveler decided to discuss the pilgrims themselves, and those who surrounded him, even in broad terms, rather than the architecture of the city in one succinct location within the text, rather than interspersed throughout it.

Ibn Jubayr placed Jerusalem within a spatial context and spent some time discussing the mosques and pilgrims of the city. One cannot fully remove the spectacular and the wondrous from tales of Jerusalem, which explained his deference in discussions of the Dome of the Rock. However, his section on Jerusalem in comparison with Baghdad illustrated a disparity between the two cities in coverage and accessibility. Jerusalem's Christian control signified an area that, during the Middle Ages and in the midst of the crusades, would not have been welcomed Muslims. Ibn Jubayr's language suggested that he did not enter the city. As a pilgrimage location, Jerusalem represented an important holy site for Christians and Muslims alike. For Muslims, the Dome of the Rock held religious significance as the place where Muslims scholars suggested Muhammad ascended into heaven. Baghdad did not have this attraction, and yet, the city received more attention. This could perhaps be attributed to the fact that Baghdad was the center of the "Islamic world;" however, this notion was largely unsubstantiated within Ibn Jubayr's text itself. Rather, where Ibn Jubayr was able to enter Baghdad as a Muslim, he could not do so in a city under contention and under the control of the Christians. He described some of the architectural wonders of which he knew or heard described, but these insertions were only a small part of the narrative. Considering this, he still discussed the general populations. He discussed the pilgrims surrounding him. In this sense, we can identify a thread of his own experiences and perceptions, not crafted in order to assert a particular image of Jerusalem for an audience.

Ibn Jubayr's *Travels* lacked the sensationalism seen in later travel accounts of the fourteenth century as he focused on the portrayal of populations in his journeys and relied on his experiences and own perceptions to craft a narrative. Ibn Jubayr placed a greater emphasis on Baghdad than Jerusalem; however, he described populations and architectural features of both cities. He not only discussed the general populations, but also provided more in depth perceptions of religious leaders. Moreover, despite his descriptions of the architecture of the city, he reminds the readers of the people within the cities. Ibn Jubayr's narrative, unlike later fourteenth century, did not create "silent cities," but rather focused on providing a more complete narrative in order to educate and provide insight into the East.

3

THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO

Lessons in History and Miracles: Marco Polo in Baghdad

One may not be surprised to find that the merchant Marco Polo began his discussions of

Baghdad talking about the markets and wealth of the city. However, rather than describe specific

details and his own experiences, Polo moved away from the markets, and, instead, explained the

history of Baghdad, beginning with the Mongol conquest of the city. Polo specifically related:

> To the Caliph of Baghdad belonged the greatest treasure of gold and silver and precious stones
> that ever belonged to any man. Let me tell you about it. It happened in the year of Our Lord 1255
> that the Great Khan of the Tartars, whose name was Hulagu, assembled a huge army and came
> against Baghdad.[126]

He proceeded to recount the sacking of Baghdad by the Mongols from their perspective. He

listed names of significant Mongol leaders and figures. While in China, he sat in the presence of

Mongol political figures as he recounted in his *Travels*. Rather than discuss the architecture or

people, he only offered a brief history learned from the Mongols, as introduced above, and

provided a story of Christians moving a mountain in order to escape death at the hands of the

caliph. These elements presented an image of the fantastic and sensational through tales of great

conquests and miracles performed by God. Moreover, he directly addressed an audience within

the text. "Let me tell you," represented a direct instance where Polo spoke to the reader.[127] This

built on the fourteenth century paradigm that asserted travel literature during the fourteenth

century was written for a specific audience in order to maintain cultural fantasy through

sensationalized tales. As we analyze these constructions in greater depth, the removal of the

individual will be specifically highlighted as well as the specific narrative that Polo told in order

to sensationalize his time in Baghdad.

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[126] Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, 52.
[127] Ibid.

Though he began his text highlighting the wonder and magnificence of the markets of

Baghdad, he soon departed from this and instead discussed the Mongol invasion of the city. Even

in the history of the sacking of Baghdad, Polo explained the events in the form of a parable.

After the Mongol conquest of Baghdad, the European traveler related the following tale of the

demise of the Caliph:

> After [the Caliph's] capture a tower was discovered, filled with gold. When Hulagu saw this he
> was amazed and ordered the Caliph to be brought before him. 'Caliph,' said he, 'why have you
> heaped up all this treasure? What did you mean to do with it? Did you not know that I was your
> enemy and was coming against you with all this host to despoil you? Knowing this, why did you
> not take your treasure and give it to knights and hired soldiers to defend you and your city?' The
> Caliph made no answer, because he did not know what to say. Then Hulagu said: 'Caliph, since I
> see that you love treasure so dearly, I will give you your own to eat.' Next he ordered that the
> Caliph be taken and put in the treasure tower and that nothing should be given him to eat or drink.
> 'Now, Caliph,' he said, 'eat your fill of treasure, since you are so fond of it: for you will get
> nothing else.' After that he left him in the tower, where at the end of four days he died. So it
> would have been better indeed for the Caliph if he had given away his treasure to defend his land
> and his people rather than die with all his people and bereft of everything. And since then there
> has been no other Caliph.[128]

The focus of the above tale circled on the faults of the Muslim leader and his greed.

Additionally, the tale provided a sense of the power and authority of the Mongols. However, in

looking at the parable quality of the text, there were archetypes that even this brief excerpt

provided. The protagonist represented the Mongol Hulagu, the Khan of the Levant.[129] While the

caliph acted as the antagonist. Rather than prepare his soldiers for the impending invasion, the

caliph kept his wealth and treasure to himself, and his avarice became his downfall. Baghdad fell

and people died because of the greed of one man. Rather than paint a picture of the state of the

city, the treatment of the people, or the policies of the Mongols, Polo provided readers with a

story of the caliph's downfall, complete with a moral. Tales of the fantastic, of a Caliph placed

into a tower with treasures and left to die as a lesson against greed, obscured realities of the

invasion of Baghdad. The people of the city, their practices and customs, and his interactions

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128 Ibid., 53.
129 Latham, "Introduction," 12.

with them were omitted from the narrative in favor of this sensationalized tale with elements of the fantastic, stimulating the reader's imagination of the East.

Marco Polo acknowledged that the text omitted customs of Baghdad, which illustrated the sensational quality of the text. One may question whether he went to Baghdad, especially considering the dearth of detail with his descriptions of the city. Polo may not have traveled to Baghdad; however, his text described his travels, and from this, we are able to analyze the sensationalism within the writings. Polo stated, "there is much else I might have told you about happenings and customs in Baghdad; but, as this would run to a tedious length, I have cut short my account. Instead, I will tell you of a great miracle, as you will hear."[130] Though he claimed to know and have experienced much about Baghdad, he removed the information in order to relate to his readers a miracle which he said he witnessed. Miracles, though they play an essential role in the Christian tradition, equally represented an aspect attributed to sensationalism, since the tale coincided with more fantastic elements rather than actualities.

The miracle which Marco Polo related once again involved the caliph as the antagonist and a group of Christians as the protagonists. Day and night, an unnamed caliph in Baghdad paced the floors, despising all Christians. He wished to convert them, or, if that failed, kill them. The Caliph and his advisers searched through texts, and, eventually, they found a line in the Gospel that stated if Christians truly believed and prayed to God, He would move two mountains together. As a way to test their faith, the caliph summoned all Nestorian and Jacobite Christians in his land and announced that they were to pray and have good faith enough to move the mountain he indicated in the distance. If they did not, he would kill them all or have them convert to Islam. The Christians had ten days to move the mountain and prove their doctrine true. The Christians, fearful of their fate, prayed eight of the ten days. An angel came down to speak

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[130] Marco Polo, *Travels*, 53.

to a Christian bishop of high piety. The angel said to seek out a shoemaker with one eye, have

him pray, and God would move the mountain. The shoemaker was without sin and more pious

than most Christians. He had cut out one of his eyes because of temptation presented after a

woman with a beautiful leg and foot walked into his shop. He sent her away without selling her

shoes and thrusted a sharp, metal object into his eye, causing it to burst as punishment for his sin.

When the Christians rose on the morning of the tenth day, they marched to the base of the

mountain where the caliph waited for them with an army of Muslims ready to slaughter the

Christians. The shoemaker came to the front of the crowd, fell to his knees, and raised a cross

above his head commanding the mountain, by the will of God, to move. The mountain shook and

crumbled, and the caliph looked on in disbelief. Following this event, the caliph converted to

Christianity in secret as proven by the cross found around his neck. Because of this, he was not

buried with other caliphs but in a hidden place. The tale of the miracle illustrated not only the

decent of an angel, the falling of a mountain, and the conversion of an unnamed Caliph, but also

the power of faith in Christianity, the righteousness of the people, and the brutality of

Muslims.[131]

  The miracle related contained sensationalist elements through the presentation and

preservation of religious and cultural fantasy of Christian superiority. Polo used language that

portrayed all Muslims as enemies. Specifically, he stated, "indeed, it is a fact that all the

Saracens in the world are agreed in wishing ill to all the Christians in the world."[132] As he

recounted the miracle, Polo generalized Muslims and Christians and continued perpetuating a

myth that did not reflect reality. While during the Crusades, tensions between Christians and

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[131] Ibid., 53-57.

[132] Ibid., 53-54. "Saracens" also represents a derogatory term used to refer to Muslims. Christians during the Middle Ages used this term over "Muslims." Both Marco Polo and John Mandeville use it exclusively to refer to Muslims.

Muslims were high, the generalization that *all* Christians and Muslims hated each other remained rooted in fantasy rather than truth. Moreover, for centuries, Baghdad housed both Christians and Muslims within a community of different confessional identities. Christians, in order to maintain their faith within the city, were required to pay a special poll tax (*al-jizya*). During the ninth century, scholars from both religions often engaged in discourse, and some of these polemical and apologetic works survive as testament to this fact.[133] This example, wedged in the middle of his explanation of the miracle, perpetuated cultural and religious myth of Muslims in the East. Moreover, in looking at Ibn Jubayr's text, in his recollections of Sicily, we can see this point discounted from both Christians and Muslims. Ibn Jubayr related:

> The strangest thing that we were told was that this Rumi King, when he perceived some needy Muslims staring from the ship, having not the means to pay for their landing because the owners of the boats were asking so high a price for their rescue, enquired, this King, concerning them, and learning their story, ordered that they be given one hundred ruba'i of his coinage in order that they might alight. All the Muslims thus were saved and cried, 'Praise be to God, Lord of the Universe.'[134]

The Christians in this instance saved the Muslim, but Ibn Jubayr, a Muslim author, painted them as the saviors, not in a negative light. To be sure, Islam, as a later development than Christianity, did not view, initially, the religion as heresy, but rather, Islam represented the true path. Jesus, though divine in Christianity, was seen as a prophet in Islam. Marco Polo's earlier assertion that Muslims despised all Christians was not a reality, and even in the time of turmoil from which Ibn Jubayr was writing, one can view in the above example that he did not hate all Christians.

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[133] For more information on Christian and Muslim cohabitation and scholarly exchange, see C.H. Becker, "Christian Polemic and the Formation of Islamic Dogma," in *Muslims and Others in Early Islamic Society*, ed. Robert Hoyland (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004), Sidney H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), Sidney H. Griffith, "The Unity and Trinity of God: Christian Doctrinal Development in Response to the Challenge of Islam - An Historical Perspective," in *Christian Theology in Islam*, eds. Michael Root and James J. Buckley (New York: James Clarke & Co. Ltd, 2014), 1-30, and Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam)* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, Inc., 1998).

[134] Ibn Jubayr, *Travels*, 337-338.

Rather, in Sicily, "The Muslims live beside [Christians] with their property and farms. The Christians treat these Muslims well and 'have taken them to themselves as friends' [Qur'an XX, 41]."[135] Ibn Jubayr's citation of the Qur'an applied a sense of potential to these Christians, in that they could become Muslims if they so chose. As already discussed, Ibn Jubayr sought those religiously devout, and though he may not be Christian, he recognized the faith and goodness of the Christians. Thus, Marco Polo's generalized statement that all Muslims despised Christians was founded in mythic associations with the East and Islam as a confessional identity. Rather than recount his specific experiences, he used sensational anecdotes as a means to maintain the "other" in European cultural fantasy.

Additionally, Polo also brought out the aspect of the mountain crumbling and falling to the ground in order to illustrate the power and superiority of Christianity, which also represented sensationalism in its descriptions of the fantastic. In order to demonstrate success for the Christians, the mountain needed to move. However, the way in which Polo described the event did not involve any matters of figurative language. Instead, he presented the information as reality. The tale additionally presented qualities similar to a parable. In this story, the shoemaker with a simple job and of a lower class, maintained a righteous state, high in the eyes of God. As such, the crumbling of the mountain at the prayer of a shoemaker represented a fantastic element that Polo's European readers would devour as fact in the maintenance of religious and cultural fantasy as testament to Christianity, and its perseverance against the oppression of the Muslims.

Once again, Christians and Muslims were presented under generalized terms and only the shoemaker, the bishop, and the caliph represented personalized individuals within the tale. The Christian characters reflected absolute piety, while the Caliph looked to dominate and kill the Christians: good and evil. These archetypes themselves represented a two-dimensional portrait of

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[135] Ibid., 339.

characters that go unnamed. Though Polo provided a date, the translator indicated that the date in another manuscript differed.[136] Polo utilized the miracle to maintain Christianity's superiority within a world of religious turmoil; however, in doing so, he presented a sensationalized narrative of Baghdad that removed the individual from the cities and presented generalizations within the text.

Marco Polo, in describing Baghdad, completely ignored the populations as he presented a history of the city during the Mongol invasion that he transformed into a parable and narrative of a miracle. The focus on a parable and narrative sensationalized Christian superiority as opposed to Muslim domination. Polo asserted that he saw much of the culture, yet chose not to include it within the narrative. This ignorance of individuals and people of the city sustained European cultural perception cultivated since the beginning of the Crusades. Moreover, Polo's focus on the wondrous hindered the presentation of realities. To be sure, Polo followed the same mechanisms as other fourteenth century travelers in this description, which represented the development of a fourteenth century paradigm, and shift to the written removal of populations in Baghdad and Jerusalem. Marco Polo preserved cultural fantasies of Christian superiority over Muslims that was characteristic of Christendom and resonated with the population, rather than present an image of the ordinary man within Baghdad and the reality of the time, and in doing so, he presented Baghdad as a "silent city."

The King Interested in Traveling to Jerusalem: Marco Polo in Jerusalem

Much like Marco Polo's description of Baghdad, he introduced discussions of Jerusalem with a story of a king who wished to travel to Jerusalem but could not, so he sent a bishop in his stead. The account illustrated an omission of the individuals within his Jerusalem narrative, as

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[136] Latham, "Notes," 57.

well as an account not based in actualities. Moreover, Polo's actual mention of Jerusalem was

limited. In reference and description of the city, Polo stated:

> The bishop took leave of the king and made ready and started on his way in the guise of a
> pilgrim, very honorably arrayed. He journeyed so far by sea and land that he came to Jerusalem.
> He went straight to the [Church of the Holy] Sepulchre and worshipped there and did to it such
> reverence and honour as a Christian ought to do to such a holy and venerable thing such as is this
> sepulchre. And he made a great offering there on behalf of the king who had sent him. When the
> bishop had done all that he came to do well and wisely, like the wise man that he was, then
> continued on the homeward journey with all his company.[137]

His description of the city is reported through the tale of the bishop, not through the use of first

person to relate what he saw himself. Rather than discuss the Muslims, he only related the

bishop's piety and task as a pilgrim to the city. Polo seemed to relate the duties of a pilgrim to the

city as he described the actions of the bishop. This can be seen through his use of the phrase, "as

a Christian ought to do."[138] His prescription of duties related to his audience, who were primarily

Christians. He provided a guide for what to do in offering and paying homage to God. However,

Marco Polo does not give instructions for how to arrive to the sepulchre, nor a description for

those traveling. He focused on the pilgrimage of this one bishop without providing any

contextual information by which to characterize the city and navigate it.

Moreover, in his short description, there lacked people within the city save the bishop

himself. The placement of people within the narrative perhaps infringed on the goal of describing

the piety of the bishop and the clear-cut mission for pilgrimage. This description more closely

resembled a hagiography, where the all attention was placed on the saint. However, one then

could wonder the purpose of mixing hagiography within a travel account. If he wrote to convey a

hagiography, it illustrated two aspects to Polo's tale. First, he wrote for an audience in order to

convey the location and actions associated with pilgrimage. Second, Polo stressed the piety of

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[137] Marco Polo, *Travels*, 304-305.
[138] Ibid., 304.

Christian leaders, though once again, this bishop remained unnamed. However, the king and bishop could easily be transposed into a European context and made further relatable to his audience. Thus, Polo's discussions of Jerusalem were short and contained no people, generalized or otherwise, save for a single bishop traveling into the city to pay homage in place of the king. He was a pious man, free of fault, and persistent in his task. Polo sensationalized Jerusalem through the maintenance of the cultural assumption of ecclesiastic piety. Polo elided the individuals of the city, and instead, he told a story in order to view Jerusalem in the text; therefore, he did not recount realities, but rather focused on the piety and obedience of the bishop, a sensationalized aspect of the text.

THE TRAVELS OF JOHN MANDEVILLE

The Story Rings a Bell: John Mandeville on Baghdad

John Mandeville all but completely ignored Baghdad as a place of travel in his fourteenth

century travel account. By the fourteenth century, Baghdad had been sacked by the Mongols, and

its prominence further slipped in cultural significance. Similar to Marco Polo Mandeville spoke

about Baghdad in his discussion of the Mongols, and Mandeville used the same story of the

Caliph to relate the little information provided:

> [The Great Khan] sent letters of perpetual peace to all the Christian men who lived in his realm, and sent his brother Halaon [Hulagu] with a great army to wrest the Holy Land from the Saracens and give it to Christian men, and to destroy the law of Muhammad; and also capture the Caliph of Baghdad who was Lord and Emperor over the Saracens. Hulagu went and captured the Caliph, and found him great plenty of treasure, so much that it seemed to him there could not be much more in the world after what was found with him. And then Hulagu said to him, 'Why would you not pay enough for enough men with your treasure to withstand me and defend your land?' And he said, 'I had enough men of my own.' Then said Hulagu, 'You were the God of the Saracens, and gods don't need food and drink; and so as far as we are concerned you will never have anything to eat or drink; but if you want you can eat your treasure and precious stones, which you have so eagerly gathered up and loved so much.' And he locked him up without food or drink with his treasure; he died from hunger and thirst.[139]

Mandeville used the same story of the conquest that Polo did, despite that Polo's text was

published approximately fifty years earlier. The presence of the account in another fourteenth

century travel text further illustrated an interconnected nature to these texts that borrowed

information to craft a narrative. Whereas Polo's discussion of this tale relayed a moral,

Mandeville simply told of the caliph's death with no insertion of commentary on the event.

However, through the reliance of this story to recount Baghdad, he removed the individual to

discuss history in the downfall of the Muslim capital, as Marco Polo had done, and thus

sensationalized his narrative.

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[139] John Mandeville, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, trans. C.W.R.D Moseley (London: Penguin Books, 1983), 148-149.

It has already been established that Mandeville did not exist, and in analyzing his travels, the insertion of what may have been a commonly known story of Baghdad represented a tactic to conceal experience of his travels to the city. Nevertheless, as a travel text, John Mandeville's *Travels* ignored the individual in order to maintain cultural fantasy. The tale of the caliph who was locked in his tower with his jewels had entered, by this point, into the cultural memory of Europe through the multiple accounts that presented the story with little manipulation. Through Mandeville's recapitulation of the events in Baghdad's capture, he further ensconced the tale in the European understanding of Baghdad.

The Center of the World: Mandeville in Jerusalem

Mandeville portrayed Jerusalem as the center of the world and talked about the city more than any other traveler analyzed in this study. He stated within the text that pilgrimage was his ultimate purpose for travel. However, he also acknowledged that he was not traveling simply for himself, but rather in order to provide a guide to pilgrimage.[140] Through this recognition of audience and his removal of populations, Mandeville also wrote to entertain and inspire awe, thus inherently including his readers into his discussions of place.

After stating his purpose for travel, Mandeville said, "he who wants to pass over the sea to Jerusalem, may go by many ways, both by sea and by land depending on the countries he comes from; many ways come to a single end."[141] The roads of travel all converged on Jerusalem, whether by land or by sea. He described the cities surrounding Jerusalem and the features of those cities using examples from the Bible in order to provide context for the reader. For example, he stated, "There is the city of Jopp [Joppa]; but it is called Jaffa after one of Noah's sons, called Japhet, who founded it. And some men say it is the oldest city in the world,

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140 Ibid., 45
141 Ibid.

for it was founded before Noah's flood."[142] He spent the majority of the text describing cities

around Jerusalem, without going into detail about Jerusalem itself. On multiple occasions

throughout the text, he discussed that Jerusalem represented the center of the world. In another

instance, he stated directly, "for it is a commonplace that Jerusalem is in the middle of the earth;

it may be proved thus."[143] The placement of Jerusalem as the center of the world and the Biblical

citations explored within the text illustrated Mandeville's view as a pilgrim, but the construction

of the world itself represented a part of medieval geography that illustrated his Christian point of

view.

The Church of the Sepulchre represented the first place a pilgrim should enter, according

to Mandeville. He described the outside and inside of the Church with awe. At this particular

location, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is said to have been constructed on the hill where

Jesus was crucified. Mandeville provided detail into this aspect in particular:

> Also inside that church, on the right side, is the hill of Calvary, where Our Lord was crucified. The Cross was set in a mortice in the rock, which is white, streaked with red in colour. Upon the rock blood dropped from the wounds of Our Lord when he suffered on the Cross. It is now called Golgotha; people go up the steps to it. And in that mortice Adam's head was found after Noah's flood, as a token that the sins of Adam should be redeemed in that place. And higher on that rock Abraham made sacrifice to Our Lord.[144]

The rock within the Church held a high significance in Christian tradition as it held the site of

three major events within the religion's tradition: the discovery of Adam's head, Abraham's

sacrifice, and Jesus' crucifixion. In describing the church in detail and connecting it to these three

events, Mandeville provided a timeline and rooted homeland for Christianity. However, in doing

so, he did not present new information or new perspective since these explanations had been

circulating throughout Christendom for nearly a millennium. Though he did not attack Muslims

like Polo did, he did similarly situate his discussion of Jerusalem in the context of Biblical

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[142] Ibid., 57.
[143] Ibid., 129.
[144] Ibid., 77-78.

tradition. Genesis through Adam's head, Abraham's near sacrifice of his son, Isaac, and Jesus'

crucifixion represented three fixed points in the Christian faith that established the foundations

for Christianity. Additionally, the description of each aspect to the Church of the Holy Seplechre

served as a visual aid to contemplation and emphasized the typological succession of Old to new

Testament through Christ's redemption of Adam's sins and the reenactment of the sacrifice of

Isaac.

Other travel guides referenced the elements recorded by Mandeville, illustrating their

presence in ongoing discourse regarding the sites. In *A Lonely Wayfarer's Guide to Pilgrimage*,

'Alī ibn Abī Bakr al-Harawī (d. 1215 CE) called this site Kanīsat al-Qumāma (the Church of the

Refuse Heap), referencing the belief that Adam emerged from the split in the rock, and discussed

the crucifix located just above the crack; however, he provided no mention of the rock on which

Abraham nearly sacrificed his son. Al-Harawī explained that the Refuse Heap name stemmed

from the fact that "it served as the garbage heap for the city."[145] This image did not reflect the

beauty and majesty described by Mandeville; however, this could also represent a literary tactic

to belittle the holiest church within Christendom. The absence of Abraham's sacrifice in one

guide did not necessarily suggest in a deficiency in the other. Rather, the Muslim guide helped to

corroborate the information surrounding the church and the accounts of its significance, despite

the association of the location with a garbage heap.

The detail with which Mandeville described the Church did not translate into a

description of the environment of the city and cultural practices. The Church of the Holy

Sepulchre represented the wondrous, and even in his description of surrounding churches, he

omitted experiences with individuals of common origin. Despite his statement of the regulation

of some churches by Muslims, he asserted that he received written permissions from the sultan to

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[145] Al-Harawī , *A Lonely Wayfarers Guide to Pilgrimage*, 76.

view all areas he desired – relics and churches included.[146] In one specific instance, he discussed the Temple of Our Lord, the site where Solomon first built his Temple which Titus, the Emperor of Rome, burned after laying siege to the city.[147] Once again, he described the grandeur of the temple and its religious significance.[148] Mandeville focused on the architecture of the city and the sites for pilgrimage rather than paint a more complete portrait of the city.

Mandeville removed the population of the city in his *Travels* in order to discuss the sites that were of interest to Europeans. In a land of Muslims, Christians, and Jews, Mandeville discussed no interactions with any of the people within the city. As stated prior, he described the permissions he received personally from the sultan. This tactic represented one that was similar to Marco Polo when he invoked the names of the Khans. In discussing architecture and political figures, Mandeville did not include any perceptions of the people surrounding the locations, which reflected only a partial understanding of the complexities within these cities. He left out the people within Jerusalem in order to provide Europeans only with a guide to locations, and thus, put emphasis on place over people. He strived to recount the architecture of the city, the wondrous and beautiful, not the actual environment of the region, which reflected sensationalism as he attempted to maintain the religious fantasy associated with these areas, especially when compared with the description provided in *A Lonely Wayfarer's Guide to Pilgrimage*.

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146 John Mandeville, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, 80.
147 Ibid., 81.
148 Ibid., 80-83.

THE TRAVELS OF IBN BATTUTA

Baths and Sultans: Ibn Battuta in Baghdad

Ibn Battuta took his time in arriving to Baghdad. On multiple occasions, he stated that caravans or a group he traveled with carried onto Baghdad, while he went another direction and to another city. Ibn Battuta's description of Baghdad focused on two elements: architecture and political figures. As he entered Baghdad, he provided the city's alternate names, the City of Peace and Capital of Islam, and began discussions of the city generally.[149] He related that Baghdad held eleven cathedral mosques, numerous other mosques and *madrasas* (schools), and a great number of baths.[150] Of all the architectural structures within Baghdad, Ibn Battuta spent the greatest amount of time discussing the baths. He stated:

> The baths at Baghdad are numerous and excellently constructed, most of them being painted with pitch, which has the appearance of black marble. The pitch is brought from a spring between Kufa and Basra, from which it flows continually. It gathers at the sides of the spring like clay and is shovelled up and brought to Baghdad. Each establishment has a large number of private bathrooms, every one of which has also a wash-basin in the corner, with two taps supplying hot and cold water. Every bather is given three towels, one to wear around his waist when he goes in, another to wear around his waist when he comes out, and the third to dry himself with. In no town other than Baghdad have I seen all this elaborate arrangement, though some other towns approach it in this respect.[151]

The baths of Baghdad were in and of themselves a marvel on which Ibn Jubayr, too, commented. The detail Ibn Battuta allocated to the baths spoke to the wonder he found with them. Though he mentioned visitors to the baths, he only did so to illustrate their extravagance. His expressions of awe were apparent in his text, as he stated that no bath he had seen before came close to that of Baghdad's. Additionally, he emphasized the numerousness of baths at Baghdad, once again reflecting a more expression of wonderment. This is not to say that these baths were not as

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[149] Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, 99.

[150] Ibid. Madrasas were educational institutions, which Ibn Battuta related were all in ruins by this time.

[151] Ibid.

magnificent as Ibn Battuta related. Instead, he chose to focus on the baths rather than the experiences with the people with whom he interacted. Baths represented social spheres, and the imagery created through his description ignores this attribution. Baghdad fell silent in his description. The images produced from the text were reminiscent of ancient ruins, as though the city's people long abandoned it, and Ibn Battuta was the only person there to see these structures. This would not have been the case. Despite the age and lost prominence of Baghdad, the city remained inhabited and populated, yet Ibn Battuta ignored this even as he discussed areas designed for social engagement. Ibn Battuta's creation of a "silent city" allowed a control of the image readers saw through their reading. His descriptions aligned with the maintenance of cultural fantasy and specific sites he valued in Baghdad, rather than provide details of interactions with common people.

Following his discussion of the baths at Baghdad, he proceeded to describe the western portion of the city, which, as from Ibn Jubayr's writings, remained in ruins. It is worth noting that unlike Ibn Jubayr, he did not mention the palace of the caliph, though by this time, the Mongols had long conquered the city. However, he did mention the thirteen city sectors that survived the test of time and conflict. He did not go into detail about this part of the city, but rather, provided his readers with a sweeping overview of western Baghdad. As he described the eastern section of the city, he related that there were an abundance of bazaars, and the largest of which was called the "Tuesday Bazaar."[152] In comparison with Ibn Jubayr, his description of the city was short, and instead of focusing on interactions with people within the city, Ibn Battuta used the descriptions of the city in order to illustrate a visual overview of Baghdad as a place of antique prominence with discussion of a limited number of architectural features.

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[152] Ibid., 100.

Ibn Battuta stated that his visit happened to coincide with the visitation of the sultan of the "two 'Iraqs and of Khurasan," Abu Sa'id Bahadur Khan (r. 1316-1335).[153] He praised the leader as young and kind. This same praise echoed that given by Ibn Jubayr to the 'Abbasid caliph. The sultan was a celebrity, and a certain degree of awe could be expected from Ibn Battuta. However, unlike Ibn Jubayr, Ibn Battuta provided a brief summary of his rise to power and how he overcame corruption and insolence of the emir, Juban. However, he also described the death of the sultan, which indicated a later addition following the conclusion of his *Travels*. After providing this history of the sultan he saw while in Baghdad, he left the city, following the mobile camp of the sultan, consisting of royal troops in order to protect the sultan (*mahalla*).[154] He did return to Baghdad, by which time the sultan he encountered the first time in Baghdad had been killed by his wife. Ibn Battuta briefly mentioned that on his return to Baghdad, the sultan was now Shaykh Hasan. He did not see this sultan the second time he was in city, and stated that Shaykh Hasan was enroute to fight Sultan Atabeg Afrasiyab of Lur.[155] However, he provided no additional information, whether on individuals or the architecture of the city. Ibn Battuta's mention of the new sultan of the region concluded the section he provided of Baghdad.

Ibn Battuta removed the individuals of the city in order to spend more time discussing the sultan and architectural wonders of the city. His recollections were brief and demonstrated a need to portray the city as an overview. His lack of discourse of the individuals within the city followed the fourteenth century paradigm for travel literature, where authors of this period removed the populations of cities in his *Travels*. Ibn Battuta's discussions of Baghdad followed the same model as those European travelers. Experiences centered on the architectural wonders of the cities and political figures in order to maintain an interest for predetermined Muslim

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[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid., 100-101.
[155] Ibid., 303.

audiences in the West. The baths, bazaars, and sultan each represented elements of travel that constituted a sense of wonder since they were "foreign" to many Westerners. Thus, Ibn Battuta's recollections of Baghdad reflected a removal of the city's population through its limited focus on architecture of and political visitors to Baghdad, despite his choice to describe areas where social interaction was sure to have occurred.

The Dome of the Rock: Ibn Battuta in Jerusalem

Ibn Battuta ranked Jerusalem third in magnificence following those pilgrimage sites at Mecca and Medina, and only discussed the mosques and churches to be found there.[156] He detailed the Dome of the Rock as it was the primary site of pilgrimage for Muslims within Jerusalem. It is worth noting that he did mention the al-Aqsa mosque next door to the Dome of the Rock; however, he only described the roof and the gold and the workmanship in it.[157] Ibn Battuta took time to explain the layout of the Dome of the Rock in great detail. He provided specific measurements, entrances, and described the floor plan of the Dome.[158] Ibn Battuta specifically took time to discuss the rock itself:

> In the centre of the Dome is the blessed rock from which the Prophet ascended to heaven, a great rock projecting about a man's height, and underneath it there is a cave the size of a small room, also of a man's height, with steps leading down it. Encircling the rock are two railings of excellent workmanship, the one nearer the rock being artistically constructed in iron, and the other of wood.[159]

Ibn Battuta described the rock and its surrounding fixtures with a reverence akin to that of John Mandeville. The Dome of the Rock represented a site of prominence in Islamic tradition, and this significance was reflected within Ibn Battuta's writing. As a site of pilgrimage, one cannot fault the wonder and awe Ibn Battuta provided to the mosque. However, once again, he did not

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[156] Ibid., 55.
[157] Ibid., 56.
[158] Christians were not allowed in the Dome of the Rock of al-Aqsa mosque at this time.
[159] Ibid.

discuss those he saw in the mosque or the city more generally. He walked among people, yet

spoke as though he was the only viewer of the rock. His primary focus on the Dome of the Rock

continued with the fourteenth century paradigm of travelers where architecture represented the

primary focus of city discussions.

It is worth noting that Ibn Battuta also focused on the primary Christian pilgrimage sites,

and though he did not call them by name, they were the Mosque of the Ascension and the

Church of the Holy Sepulchre.[160] His focus on another aspect of religious sites illustrated a

devotion to God. Ibn Battuta did not despise Christians as Marco Polo indicated all Muslims did

within his travels, but rather saw their confessional identity as faulty. In his description of the

church, he stated:

> [The Mosque of the Ascension] is said to mark the place whence Jesus ascended to heaven. In the
> bottom of the same valley, is [the Church of the Holy Sepulchre] venerated by the Christians,
> who say that it contains the grave of Mary. In the same place there is another church which the
> Christians venerate and to which they come on pilgrimage. This is the [Church of the Holy
> Sepulchre] of which they falsely persuaded to believe it contains the grave of Jesus.[161]

Though Ibn Battuta stated that the Christians were false in their belief that Christ's grave rested

within the soil, he still mentioned the sites of Christian pilgrimage. Ibn Battuta did not discuss

the grandeur of the churches as Mandeville did; however, he still provided insight into the

architectural wonders relevant to pilgrimage on a broader level. He spent time describing the

sights of relevance for both Christians and Muslims, and yet, he failed to discuss the people. His

focus on the mosques and churches of the two confessional identities fed into the notion of

sensationalism through their marketed grandeur which perpetuated an incomplete understanding

of the cities for their actualities.

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[160] Gibb characterized the first site as the Mosque of the Ascension, rather than chapel.

[161] Ibid., 57. Though Ibn Battuta characterizes this as two separate churches, both sites are found within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Within the church, there are multiple chapels.

Gibb and Chism have argued that Ibn Battuta, in accordance with Ibn Jubayr, placed an emphasis on people over place; however in the specific instances of Baghdad and Jerusalem, this is not the case.[162] The cities, full of wonder and architectural feats and political figures, offered a distraction from what may be considered mundane. However, highlighting these aspectso, Ibn Battuta and the other fourteenth century travelers neglected to write of the individuals they encountered. The incorporation of individuals did not have to exist on a name level, but rather a reflection of the general culture of society with which these travelers supposedly interacted. Thus, Ibn Battuta, in his discussions of Baghdad and Jerusalem, provided no indication of the presence of others surrounding him while in the cities, which coincided with the fourteenth century paradigm that suggested authors wrote of the wondrous and fantastic in order to entertain their audiences for whom they were writing, rather than educate and provide more complete detail of the city and its culture.

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[162] Gibb, "Introduction," 5, and Chism, "Memory, Wonder, and Desire in the Travels of Ibn Jubayr and Ibn Battuta," 32.

CONCLUSION

Ibn Jubayr represented a twelfth century traveler who incorporated, experiences with those he encountered and reflections on general populations in his recollections of Baghdad and Jerusalem. In essence, he populated the cities to which he traveled in his writing while still maintaining his pilgrimage mission and furthering his own knowledge of Islam. However, this changed by the fourteenth century. Marco Polo, John Mandeville, and Ibn Battuta did not populate the cities of Baghdad and Jerusalem within their works, and instead chose to detail stories of the fantastic and miraculous, political figures, and/or the architecture of the cities.

Additionally, the length of reflection on the central cities for each traveler were reduced from those of Ibn Jubayr. Baghdad represented a city of much importance for Ibn Jubayr and Ibn Battuta, and Jerusalem was a city of significance for Marco Polo and John Mandeville. The selection of cities came from the earlier discussion of medieval geography and centrality. Mandeville addressed Jerusalem's centrality in isolation. This perhaps indicated an already determined and acknowledged fact among medieval Muslims and Christians, which explained why no other traveler did so. The influence of conceptions from medieval geography, as based on the model discussed at the beginning of the research, could be seen throughout the fourteenth century works, though more so within the Mandeville's text. However, these travelers focused less on describing geography as it did not align with their primary purpose to tell of wonder, which followed the fourteenth century paradigm.

Sensationalism was defined as the purporting of unrealistic events and descriptions that were meant to entertain and inspire awe, rather than educate and disseminate knowledge. This perpetuated cultural myth or fantasy for an intended audience in the West. All of these fourteenth century travelers wrote their texts following their return home, and in the cases of Marco Polo

and Ibn Battuta, they dictated their travels to an editor who wrote the manuscripts of their travels.

In orating their travels, the fourteenth century travelers sought publication and dissemination, a

fact acknowledged by Marco Polo and John Mandeville within their texts as they addressed the

reader. However, desire for publication did not alone constitute the basis of the fourteenth

century paradigm according to this research. Rather, I assert that the removal of populations, in

which authors ignored their surrounding environments and the people within the cities,

represented the fourteenth century paradigm. The travelers deliberately did so in order to portray

a limited view of the cities focused on the wondrous and fantastic, characteristic of the fourteenth

century paradigm of travel literature, and thus portrayed Baghdad and Jerusalem as "silent

cities."

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SILENT CITIES: SENSATIONALISM AND REMOVED POPULATIONS WITHIN
FOURTEENTH CENTURY WESTERN CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM TRAVEL ACCOUNTS
OF BAGHDAD AND JERUSALEM

By

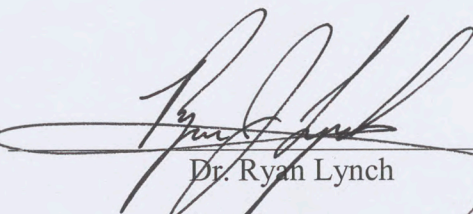Abby E. Gibbons

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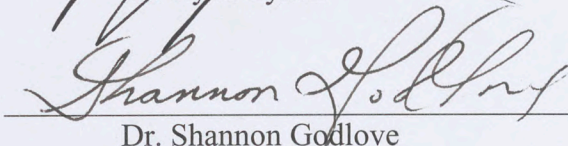COLLEGE OF LETTERS & SCIENCES

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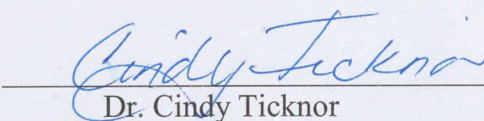Committee Member _____ Date 12/7/17
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